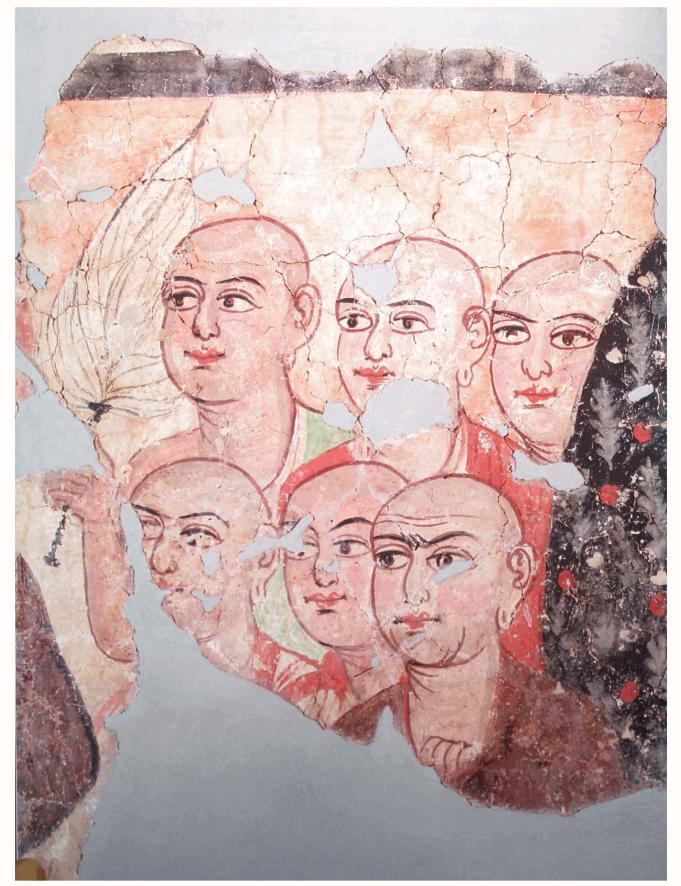
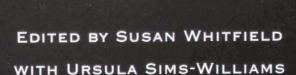
THE SILK ROAD

TRADE, TRAVEL, WAR AND FAITH



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The Silk Road Trade, Travel, War and Faith

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXHIBITION SUPPORTER

The ancient trading route known as the Silk Road has always held a fascination for the Western World. It has for more than a thousand years conjured up for us the mysterious and exotic east which very few had, until comparatively recently, visited. It was the conduit through which, as this exhibition so brilliantly shows, not only merchandise, but also ideas, pilgrims, armies, people and religions moved, having an influence far beyond its geographical boundaries.

In due course it was superseded by other more convenient and safer trading routes and the vibrant life that had existed was covered by the sands of the numerous deserts that lay across its route. Not until some nine hundred years or so later did the 'foreign devils' start to uncover the lost cities and treasures and remove what they found to their national museums. It is to a great extent these, together with what remains in China, that form the basis of this exhibition.

The Pidem Fund is proud to have played a small part in making this exhibition possible and wishes it the success which it deserves. That success will be entirely due to the hard work of the many people who have been involved; chief among these is the curator Dr Susan Whitfield of the British Library to whom the Pidem Fund pays a particular tribute.

The Pidem Fund

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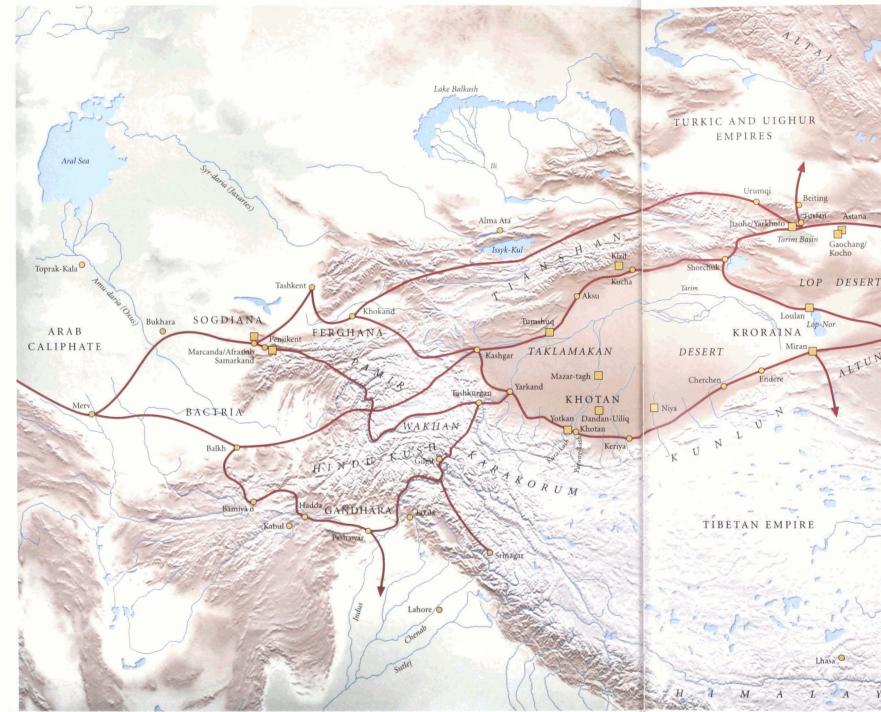
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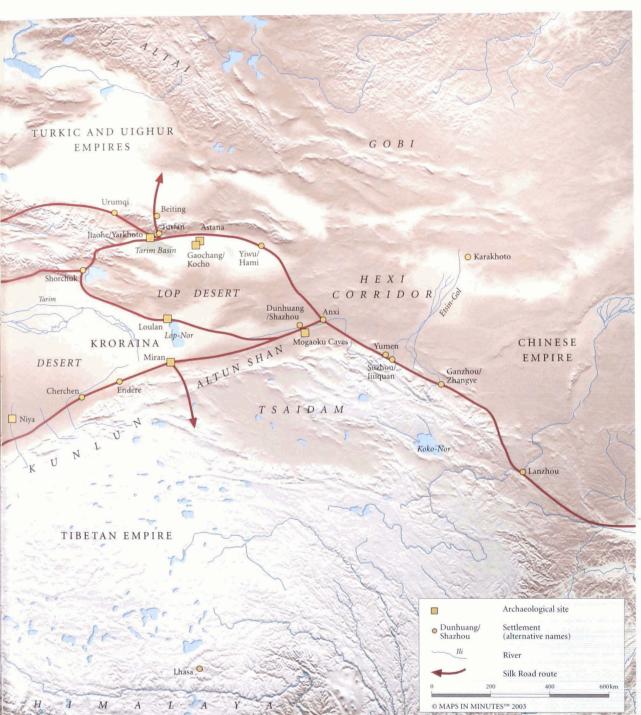
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NOTE ON TEXT

Places on the Silk Road are problematic. They have different names and sometimes different locations at different periods. Because I have selected names specifically to introduce the diversity of peoples and languages of this region, these are not always the most commonly known names. So, for example, I discuss the ruins of Niya under the heading Kroraina: the Gāndhārī name for the kingdom which incorporated Niya in the third and fourth centuries, and I also refer to the town by its Gāndhārī name, Caḍota.

The pinyin system of romanisation has been used throughout for Chinese names and terms except where the terms appear in quotations, in which case the original romanization is left standing but with the pinyin equivalent added in parentheses, or where the name is well-known in another form – such as Kashgar. Tibetan words are transcribed by the Wiley system. 'K' is used in preference to 'Q' for Turkic transcriptions. Diacritics are used throughout. Most other place names are referred to by Stein's transcriptions unless there is a more commonly-used form. There are undoubtedly many inconsistencies: this highlights the need for a comprehensive and well-researched gazateer of the historical Silk Road.

Chinese characters are given in the text for names but not for books as characters appears in the bibliography. All references in the text and notes are in Chicago Short Title style and full references are in the bibliography.

Square brackets [] and asterix * are used to indicate uncertainty and lacunae in translations.

Authors of the exhibit captions and other sections of text are identified by their initials at the end of the text. A list of contributors is given on p. 4.

Where available, Stein's unique reference number for his finds is given in brackets after the shelfmark/pressmark of the exhibit. An explanation of these reference numbers is given on p. 131. Colour images and other information on the British Library and British Museum exhibits can be found on the International Dunhuang Project web site (http://idp.bl.uk) by going to database, catalogue search (http://idp.bl.uk/CatalogueSearch) and searching using the pressmark. A gallery of the exhibits can also be found in the IDP web site archive.

INTRODUCTION: A PART OF ALL OUR HISTORIES

Narratives abound of the Silk Road: myths both ancient and medieval, historical annals, religious narratives, and tales of conquerors, monks, merchants and diplomats. Silk Road stories have been told in several notable exhibitions over the past few years, most using trade or Buddhism – or both – as the central narrative thread.¹ Many have shown recently excavated exhibits to reinforce China's role on this famous trading route. The Silk Road, at the same time, has become almost a brand name, as Wang says in her essay, it 'inspires thoughts of luxury, beauty and strength'. Displays of exquisitely crafted art objects and the accompanying marketing, which usually chooses to stress the exotic and the east, only serves to reinforce this.

The exotic is used to describe something outside our everyday experience so that we find ourselves with a want of more informative adjectives. The danger comes if we accept our initial ignorance and the exotic becomes the different, outside any possible experience. This nascent 'orientalism' was not confined to Europe; the empire at the other end of the Silk Road, China, has been just as prone to describe its neighbours (western to them) as exotic and fundamentally different from the Chinese – as the 'other.' 2

This exhibition covers the period when pre-modern China was most receptive to outside influences - the first millennium AD. China, however, was never totally isolated. Trade routes between the early cultures of China and the peoples to its west existed from earliest times, as shown by finds of Chinese silk from the first millennium BC in Southern Siberia.3 The conduit to China's west was the Hexi Corridor which led through mountain passes west of Chang'an (present-day Xian) into the Wei and Yellow River valleys. By the end of the first millennium BC, as Michaelson points out in her essay, China depended on jade brought through this route from the Silk Road kingdom of Khotan when its own reserves ran out.4 But at this time the route could not be guaranteed as it was controlled by the nomadic Xiongnu. Even the Chinese imperial envoy Zhang Qian was vulnerable. Captured by the Xiongnu when sent on a diplomatic mission to secure allies against them he only managed to escape after several years and continue west to Ferghana and Bactria. On his return to China in 126 BC he brought intelligence of these Silk Road kingdoms and their products including Ferghanan horses and Persian glass, silver and goldware.

When Zhang Qian arrived in Bactria (present-day Afghanistan) the rulers were peoples who had originally occupied China's western borders – called Yuezhi in Chinese – but who had been driven out by the Xiongnu. In the two centuries after their arrival the Yuezhi consolidated their rule in Bactria, moved south into Gandhāra – the region around Taxila in present-day Pakistan – and finally into the plains of northern India to form the Kushan empire. At the same time as this Yuezhi/Kushan expansion southwards the Chinese Han dynasty (206 BC – AD 220), following their defeat of the Xiongnu, expanded westwards sending soldiers to build and defend garrisons through the Hexi Corridor to Dunhuang, at the borders of the Gobi and Taklamakan Deserts. This allowed trade and tribute missions in and out of China and soon the Chinese aristocracy had acquired a taste not only for foreign goods, but also for foreign sports, music, wine, dancing girls and more.

The Silk Road – a name only coined in the nineteenth century – is often presented as a link between two continents of civilization – the west and the east – and the area between them as an ocean of emptiness. But routes depend on civilizations to maintain them, ensure security and provide the infrastructure for rest stops, inns, water and other requirements of the traveller. The Silk Road could only emerge when there were stable regimes along its length, producing enough wealth to create surplus goods and a demand for items beyond the daily necessities of life. The concept of a road can be a distraction, concentrating attention on the beginning and end at the expense of the stops *en route* and the lands between the stops. Far from being an ocean of emptiness, the middle of the Silk Road consisted of thriving and fascinating countries and cultures. This exhibition is concerned with these.

Very few travellers ever saw either end of the Silk Road; most merchants travelled from their home market to another and then back. The Sogdians, who lived at its centre, were exceptional. They travelled east to China and west to Constantinople in search of trade. North of the Kushan empire, Samarkand and other Sogdian city-states started to thrive in the early part of the first millennium Add. De la Vaissière argues in his essay that the Sogdians learned about trade from their Kushan neighbours and took advantage of the routes they had opened south into India. Petroglyphs along these record the changes in power. The earliest show battle scenes and images of animals, left by northern nomads and the first Yuezhi migrants in the second or first century BC. By the first century Add the Kushan were dominant, and left

inscriptions in Gāndhārī celebrating the first Kushan emperor (r. AD C.30–80). By the end of the second century Kushan was ruled as a vassal state by the Sasanian Persians, while shortly after China fragmented into short-lived kingdoms following the fall of the Han dynasty. During this last period Sogdiana emerged as a new Silk Road power and soon left its own inscriptions on the trade routes south. The stories told in this exhibition start at this time.

The Rise of Sogdiana (pp. 107-29)

Sogdiana lies on the plains between the Amu Darya (Oxus River) and the foothills of the Pamir Mountains. The petroglyphs en route to India are some of the earliest writing in Sogdian, an Iranian language, and probably date to the third and fourth centuries AD. The Sogdians formed communities at major market towns all the way into China and it is mainly from letters written by Sogdians in Dunhuang and other towns to the east that we know something of their activities (cats. 191, 192).

The letters were found a century ago where they were left at the defensive walls north of Dunhuang. The importance of another artefact which tells part of the story of Sogdian merchants in China was only discovered more recently. Since the recognition of the Sogdian funerary couch (cat. 1), now in the Miho Museum in Japan, several similar couches, both carved and painted, have come to light in north China and collections elsewhere. These finds have adding to the story told by the Ancient Letters and by Russian and French excavations in the Sogdian cities of Penjikent and Afrasiab (Samarkand), as Frantz Grenet discusses (cat. 1). In the first millennium the good relations between Sogdiana at the heart of the Silk Road and China at its eastern terminus reflected in the murals at Afrasiab (pp. 110–13) were essential to the Eastern Silk Road's stability and strength.

From Sogdiana to Khotan (pp. 133-166)

Sogdiana was a conduit for ideas, peoples, faith and goods from the Persian western half of the Silk Road. Although not a central part of this exhibition, the Persian presence on the Silk Road is ubiquitous seen, for example, in the Iranian style murals from Dandan-Uiliq (figs. 13, 14, pp. 159), Sasanian glass imports (cat. 56), documents recounting the legend of Rustam (cat. 3) or the imitation Byzantium coins in the mouths of corpses (cat. 37a). It was also present in the peoples and languages of the Silk Road. The people of Khotan (a kingdom between Sogdiana and China and the second destination in the exhibition) had founding legends linking their early population to Buddhist India and ancient China, and their language was an Indo-Iranian dialect. It was the discovery in the 1890s of documents in this then-unknown language that was one of the catalysts that prompted the Hungarian scholar Aurel Stein to take an interest in this region. He made it the target of his first expedition to Central Asia (1900-01) and was not disappointed.

The ruined sites explored by me have more than justified the hopes which led me to Khotan and into its desert. Scattered over an area which in a straight line extends for more than three hundred miles from west to east, and dating back to different periods, these ruins reveal to us a uniform and well-defined civilisation. It is easy to recognise now that this bygone culture rested mainly on Indian foundations. But there has also come to light unmistakable evidence of other powerful influences, both from the West and from China, which helped to shape its growth and to invest it with an individual character and fascination of its own.'7

These influences are exemplified by the small terracottas found at Yotkan, site of the capital of Khotan. They are modelled as monkeys (cats. 29a-k), camels (cats. 92a-d), other animals (cats. 33a, b), women's heads (cats. 88a-c) and monster heads (cats. 31). As Ghose points out here, similar terracottas have been found at sites in Northern India and Sogdian Penjikent. Other Khotanese sites yielded numerous documents on wood and paper in Khotanese written in the Indian Brāhmī script. It was less than a decade before the scholar Rudolph Hoernle deciphered these. It has taken a century, however, for the publication of a complete catalogue of the Khotanese documents from the Stein expeditions. Many are on display here for the first time (cats. 54, 55, 65, 66, 68, 69, 82, 83, 84, 90. 91, 116, 117, 118, 119, 152, 165, 271, 272, 273, 280) and in his essay the cataloguer, Professor Skjærvø, gives an overview of what they reveal about the role of Khotan on the Silk Road.

The Chinese monk Faxian left for India in 399 and commented on the number of Buddhist monasteries in Khotan. Another monk, Songyun, sent by the Northern Wei (386–534) to Gandhāra in 520, also left a travel account. The Northern Wei rulers of North China made Buddhism the state religion and commissioned cave complexes in Yungang and Longmen. They were originally nomadic tribes known as the Xianbi Tuoba from northeastern China. They battled during the fourth century for control of north China with other nomadic groups, including the Xiongnu, some of whom had been moved there after their defeat some centuries before. While the Tuoba controlled north China another nomadic peoples, the Di, formed an independent state in northwestern China along the Silk Road, calling it the Northern Liang (397–439). They also supported Buddhism and sponsored cave complexes through the Hexi corridor.

The influence of these different groups (of which the Xianbi Tuoba, Xiongnu and Di are only three among many) was considerable, open as they were to diverse influences in art and culture, including that of the northern nomadic steppes, the Gandhāran east – which was now flourishing – and the Chinese to their west and south. Their history and changing role in northern China shows the paucity of a dichotomy used all too often to interpret Central Asian history – that between nomadic and sedentary

cultures or between 'barbarians' and the 'civilised'.10 The acceptance of a dichotomy has led some historians to astonishing rhetoric: 'Who would like to leave the flesh pots and go forth into the wilderness? There are no volunteers for the Outer Darkness. To be a barbarian is a moral as well as an economic and political state. The history of Central Eurasia is a history of the barbarian."

One only hopes we have moved beyond this, although this from a book published in 2001 suggests otherwise: 'the roots of a basic duality between the nomadic and sedentary ways of life [are found] existing here from the earliest times." There has been a sophisticated debate in recent years, however, on the shortcomings of accepting an absolute distinction between the nomad and the agriculturalist and more subtle analyses are starting to appear. 13

The Tuoba Northern Wei defeated the Di Northern Liang in 439 thus opening the route west through the Hexi Corridor.14 Alongside the Kushan and Sogdian petroglyphs at Chilas en route to India, are those in Chinese recording the passage of a Northern Wei envoy around the time that they sent the Buddhist monk Songyun. By now Gandhära was ruled by the Turkic Hephthalites, but it had previously been part of the Kushan empire and thus open to influences from west and south. A new style of Buddhist art emerged here, where Hellenistic form met with Buddhist motifs. This art, along with the Gandhari language written a script unique to Central Asia, Kharosthi, by the third century had already travelled east along the Silk Road leaving its influence on Khotan and as far east as the neighbouring kingdom of Kroraina.

Kroraina: Niya to Loulan (pp. 169-186)

Kroraina, centred on Loulan in the Lop Desert is the third focal point of the exhibition. In the third and fourth centuries its control extended as far west as Niva and its art, seen in murals on shrines uncovered from the desert sands, also shows Gandharan influences. As a scholar educated in the western classical traditions, Stein was struck by their familiarity when he first excavated a Buddhist temple at Miran:

It was evident that the interior walls of the cella had once been adorned with frescoes. Yet when the digging there had reached a level of about four feet above the floor and a delicately painted dado of beautiful winged angels began to show on the wall, I felt completely taken by surprise. How could I have expected by the desolate shores of the Lop-nor, in the very heart of innermost Asia, to come upon such classical representations of Cherubim!.'15

The Miran murals, now housed in the National Museum of New Delhi, are too delicate to travel (see frontispiece) but Stein found thousands of other items at the many desert ruins at the ancient town of Cadota, north of present-day Niya. These included Gandhari documents in Kharosthi script (cats. 27, 40, 44, 45, 46, 47, 74, 75, 76, 77, 89, 141): administrative records, letters and legal documents, some sent by the king of Kroraina to the ruler of

Cadota. They offer a unique glimpse into the concerns of these oasis settlements, especially when placed in context of the archaeology. Stein explains how the sites had been abandoned over time and thus cleared of any items of intrinsic value, but '...the manifold other relics, however humble, which had safely rested in the sandburied dwellings and their deposits of rubbish... all help to bring vividly before our eyes details of ancient civilisation that without the preserving force of the desert would have been lost for ever." 16

Stein's words exemplify the aim of this exhibition. Its primary purpose is not to showcase beautiful, striking, original paintings and artefacts to tell the story of a region's, movement's or individual's art. The objects have aesthetic value, and many are wonderful works of art, but some are utensils, some mass-produced decorations, and some funerary. They are variously chosen because they are charming, informative, illustrative or in some way contribute to the telling of the stories of the Silk Road.

And the story this exhibition tells is that of the life of people along the Silk Road; lives dictated by the mundane - how to pay off debts, shame at getting drunk, how to stop mice eating the stock of grain. But these Silk Road residents are also touched by wider events - they offer poetic invectives against war and its toll on life, grief when one's baby son is abducted by raiders from the mountains - and by the spiritual and superstitious - the documents record money paid for copying Buddhist texts and making paintings to decorate the walls of local temples, prayers to lesser deities to ward off illness, divination based on the manner of a person's trembling, and the shape of clouds, fengshui diagrams and talismans and monsters to ward off evil spirits.

Miran, Cadota and the other towns of Kroraina seem to have been largely deserted by the fifth century. Defeated by the Northern Wei in 445 but and with a warming climate making the route through the Lop Desert to Dunhuang no longer viable, people started moved out. The irrigation canals silted up and the dwindling population was unable to provide enough labour to continue to make the land sustainable.

Although not an ocean of emptiness, the analogy of an ocean for this area is a useful one.17 The peoples and cultures moved like currents some, like the Gulf Stream, travelling great distances while retaining distinct characteristics, influencing the lands they passed by. Others were merged into more powerful currents, or soon settled on the ocean floor to nourish local cultures. The Yuezhi/ Kushan and the Xiongnu were examples of the first - powerful swirling currents whose origins and many sub-currents are difficult to map. The Hephthalites, who controlled Khotan. Kroraina and Gaochang as well as Gandhāra and Northern India by the fifth century, were another powerful current. They exemplify the difficulties of Central Asian scholarship. Even though they ruled a considerable area for over two centuries, had their own language and script and minted their own coins, historians are still trying to piece together a coherent pictures of the nature of the people, their language, social structure, beliefs and art.

Hephthalite power was broken in the mid-sixth century by Turks from the north (another powerful cultural current which continues to influence Central Asia today). Sogdiana came first under Turkic control and then, with the fall of Sasanian empire, under the Arab Caliphate. By this time China was thriving under the newly established Tang dynasty (618-907). Although a great empire China was, nevertheless, only first among equals. Various alliances of Turkic tribes held the region of Mongolia to China's northwest. The newly formed alliance of the first Tibetan empire was a real military threat to its west, and both empires fought over their common borders and the Silk Road kingdoms on the routes through the Pamirs into India. And the Arabs continued pushing eastwards, meeting the Chinese in battle at the Talas River in 751. The Chinese lost and a civil war in 755 forced them to withdraw troops garrisoned in Dunhuang, Khotan and other Silk Road kingdoms leaving the way clear for the Tibetans.

The Tibetan Fort at Miran (pp. 187-224)

Miran, once part of Kroraina, had already been largely abandoned by the eighth century when the Tibetans arrived. It was strategically positioned at the point where a pass led through the Kunlun Mountains to the Tsaidam Basin and thence to the Tibetan Plateau. The Tibetan built a fort to defend the pass and moved in hundreds of men with their families and support staff.

Over the following century rubbish built up in the dry desert climate, much of it thrown into small rooms adjoining the fort wall. Stein was unusual among archaeologists of his time in being interested in rubbish – although it was not always easy to recognize the objects found. On his first visit to Miran he discarded small scraps of leather, only later realizing that they were scales of armour (cat. 109).

Excavation of the rubbish heaps required a particular dedication.

'The amount of decayed animal and vegetable matter which had found a resting-place in these walled-in dustbins had often caused the remains of written records to be encrusted so thickly that it required much attention and care to spot and extract them. An all-pervading small of ammonia brought home the fact that each of these little rooms, after being used as quarters by dirt-hardened Tibetan soldiers, must have also served them intermittently for purposes far more offensive.'

This conclusion has corroborating evidence among the finds. Some of the hundreds of woodslips Stein excavated included those fashioned into spatulas, spoons and knives after their original use as tallies and records had come to an end (cats. 110, 111). Others showed evidence of being burned (cat. 112) and Takeuchi, citing a colleague, suggests that these were 'toilet scrapers'. While some excavated objects have been subjected to chemical analyses to

identify pigments (cat. 258, pp.291-93) or age (cat. 5), this particular hypothesis has yet to be tested!

Takeuchi's essay shows how much information seemingly humble finds can yield. He concentrates on one group of woodslips from Miran, those concerned with supplies for soldiers sent to man hill stations (cats. 101-4). From these we know of the considerable system of these advance warning stations and many of their names. The soldiers sent to man them were the military divisions to which the soldiers belonged: these were geographical and by this time included two areas recently taken by the Tibetans in the northeast: the Zhangzhung and the Sumpa. If the Yuezhi, Xiongnu and Hephthalites are some of the major currents affecting many parts of Central Asia, peoples like the Sumpa are more local currents, emerging only briefly in the historical records of their neighbours. Some scholars have hypothesized that the Supiya, mentioned in Khotanese (p. 42, fn. 11), Indian and Chinese documents, are the same peoples. Fortunately, the Dunhuang Library Cave, one of the richest historical sources of the Silk Road, provides many clues.

Dunhuang (pp. 227-304)

Stein's discovery of the Sogdian Ancient Letters from the Chinese defences north of Dunhuang were overshadowed by another chance find at a Buddhist cave site south east of the town. Among the hundreds of cave temples built over a thousand years from the mid-fourth century, the largest and earliest paper archive and only Buddhist library of its time was discovered in 1900 in a small sidecave whose door had been plastered over and concealed by paintings - Cave 17 or the Library Cave. Tens of thousands of Chinese scrolls, Tibetan pothi, hundreds of documents in other languages and paintings on silk, hemp and paper were stored here. The latest dated manuscript is from 1002 and thus scholars have assumed that the cave was sealed shortly after this. The reason for its sealing is not known. Stein suggested the threat of Tangut invasions in 1036 but, more recently, Rong Xinjiang has argued persuasively that it was rather the threat of the Karakhanids who had taken Khotan in 1006. At this time Dunhuang and Khotan had a close relationship. The royal families intermarried and Khotanese sponsored some of the caves: their donor portraits added to the bottom frieze (pp. 132-3).

Stein provided a model for locating his finds: he made detailed surveys, site plans and maps of each site, and then marked almost every item individually with a string of characters which define its exact find location in each site (see p.131). The only case in which this system broke down was in the case of Dunhuang manuscripts: there were simply too many. The cave had been found in 1900 by Wang Yuanlu, a resident Daoist monk. He presented manuscripts and paintings to local officials, hoping to gain financial support for his conservation work on the sculptures. This was not forthcoming and when Stein arrived in 1907 Wang Yuanlu sold him a great cache of manuscripts and paintings for a small

Does this matter? Well yes. It is meaningless to date other material relative to this if we cannot be certain that the material dates from this period. So, for example, cat. 243 was acquired by Stein from Dunhuang in 1907. Most scholars have assumed this material is genuine. There is no doubt that Stein believed it to be from the Library Cave – it has a prefix Ch. But scholars have rejected a pre-1000 date for it on stylistic and iconographical grounds. If there were strong evidence that this was a pre-1000 painting then scholars would have to revise their stylistic and iconographical hypotheses. If it dates from later, then we need to be careful when assuming that other material from Dunhuang is all pre-

Dating or provenancing an object purely on iconographical or stylistic grounds is to build on sand. The three rabbits exemplifies this (p. 290). This iconographical motif is perfectly at home in 7th-century Central Asia as a Buddhist icon, in early 13th-century Islamic context, and in 14th- and 15th-century churches in England as a Christian icon. Scholars are still trying to find whether it had an earlier incarnation — perhaps in Buddhist India or on Chinese mirrors. Ideas as well as material goods travelled along the Silk Road and were interpreted differently in different contexts.

Cave 17 material, of which there are too many exhibits to list here, has already inspired hundreds of monographs and articles. Bonnet-Bidaud and Praderie here turn a scientific eye on to a single, but tremendously important manuscript: an early star chart, providing the first detailed study. One of the collection's great strengths is its range. Galambos in his essay shows how this is being exploited now by the International Dunhuang Project (IDP) at the British Library to create an important research tool: the Dunhuang Character Database. Van Schaik and Dalton, also of IDP, are also finding paleography – up to now generally ignored in study of Chinese and Tibetan manuscripts – invaluable in their research on Tibetan manuscripts. In their essay here they identify the corpus of one scholar/scribe and then show how this challenges previously held assumptions about the sectarian division of early Buddhism. Rong Xinjiang takes another group of exhibits to

piece together the role of the king when Dunhuang was a semiautonomous kingdom. These four essays show something of the potential of this find and how much research remains to be done.

Gaochang and its cemetery (pp. 307-333)

Stein's work at the Dunhuang Library Cave was unlike most of his previous excavations which had taken place in settlements long abandoned to the desert sands. Their remoteness made them safe from all but the most determined treasure-seeker (although there were some of these). The Library Cave had been protected because it was hidden. Astana Cemetery, nearer the ancient kingdom of Gaochang north-west of Dunhuang was, however, protected neither by secrecy nor remoteness. Stein arrived there on his third expedition to find most of the tombs had been robbed. Nevertheless, the robbers left behind many items with no immediate monetary value which, for Stein and scholars since, been a rich source of information (cats. 283–294).

Stein employed as a guide Mashik, a local man who had been involved in the tomb robbery for several years. He reasoned that he would be able to direct Stein to undisturbed tombs most efficiently. He was not wrong, but was unprepared for one of Mashik's skills: that of retrieving coins from the mouths of the corpse by breaking their jaws. Stein had recognised the importance of coins in historical research since he had studied those at the British Museum as a young scholar. In her essay, Wang reinforces this by a study of a selection of coins found by Stein at Astana, Khotan and other sites (cats. 35–39), as well as documents detailing the other forms of currency in common use, including rolls of silk and Khotanese carpets and rugs, and the system of barter.

Astana was a cemetery for Chinese residents of Gaochang, but the history of the area reflects China's tenuous hold on the Eastern Silk Road over the first millennium. By the time the Tibetans were driven out of Dunhuang, the Turkic Uighurs were moving in. Finds from Gaochang/Kocho include illuminated Manichaean texts prepared by the Uighurs who had been converted to Manichaeism by Sogdians in China (cats. 5–8). This exemplifies the complexity of the Silk Road at this time and takes us back to the starting point of the Sogdians and Chinese.

Stein and the Silk Road

This exhibition is, in part, a tribute to Marc Aurel Stein, the explorer-archaeologist whose first three Central Asian expeditions provided most of the objects on display. It is perhaps provocative to praise an archaeologist from the colonial era and, moreover, one who removed so many finds from sites and took them to Europe and India. Many people feel strongly about this. My personal view is that I owe a great debt to Stein because, without his work, I would not have known about the Silk Road and its archaeological riches and so, in all probability, would not had become a scholar of this area. From a view a hundred years on I can only applaud the fact that the vast majority of Stein's finds are in public collec-

tions, accessible to serious scholars both in this generation and – because of preservation standards – for generations to come, and all clearly provenanced. The essays by Wood and Barnard explain something of the complex process which has led to the deposit and then the preservation of the manuscripts in the British Library.

But we can never be complacent about the survival of objects whether in situ – as Bamiyan has shown – or 'safely' in museums – as Berlin has shown. These artefacts therefore need to be documented. Moreover, the collections need to be studied as a whole. With the arrival of the internet, this is no longer a major logistical problem: only one of time, effort and expense. The International Dunhuang Project at the British Library is already virtually reuniting the contents of the Dunhuang Library Cave and other eastern Silk Road sites, contextualising them by providing photographs, site plans, expedition histories and bibliographies, and making them freely available to all in multi-language versions of its web site hosted by holding institutions worldwide. Not only is this facilitating scholarship, but it is helping protect the manuscripts, paintings and artefacts – many delicate and friable – for future generations. This is an initiative between all the major holders of

this material and shows how collaboration and co-operation are more conducive to the furtherment of scholarship and the survival of objects than competition.

The Silk Road is part of all our histories. Far from an ocean of emptiness, Central Asia was the centre of the world, the progenitor of many of civilisations most important inventions, and the crux of a world economy. For many hundreds of years it faded into world obscurity but now, with recent events, there is greater awareness of this part of the world and this provides us with an opportunity to try to start to understand this area, its history and its influence on all our lives. This exhibition is intended to raise as many questions as it answers. It tries to show just some of the complex interactions in art, politics, culture and life between the peoples and empires of the Silk Road. It introduces but a small part of Silk Road life, but one which, I hope, will enthuse readers to want to find out more.

Susan Whitfield

NOTES

- 1 Serinde, Juliano and Lerner, Monks and Merchants, Saiyuki.
- 2 See Zhang, Mighty Opposites and Whitfield, "Dichotomous Thinking".
- 3 Vainker, Chinese Silk.
- 4 Jade is listed as part of tribute sent by the King of Khotan to the Chinese emperors throughout the Han. However, tribute was often no more than a euphemism for trade, as Tao point out: 'The tribute system does not adequately describe these fluctuations in China's relations with foreigners. ... And even the tribute system masked what were really relations between equal and independent states. The relationship between the Han and the Hsiung-nu, for example, was at first conducted on the basis of equality... in the T'ang, Sino-Turkish and Sino-Tibetan relations were often marked by a sense of equality between the parties.' (Tao, China Among Equals, 66).
- 5 They only managed to get to Constantinople in AD 568. The Parthians seem to have blocked them before this time, probably hoping to secure a monopoly on trade.
- 6 Wenwu, Jan 2001: 4-26 for a discussion of one. Similar Chinese funerary couches are also found.
- 7 Stein, Sand-Buried Ruins, xv-xvi.
- 8 Skjærvø, Khotanese.
- 9 For a survey see Barfield, The Perilous Frontier. For art and culture of this period see Watt, Dawn.

- 10 See Whitfield, "Dichotomous Thinking".
- 11 Sinor, Inner Asia, I:95.
- 12 Knobloch, Monuments, 34
- 13 An End to Nomadism by Humphreys and Sneath went some way towards re-addressing the balance, although there is still some ground to cover.
- 14 Both these regimes are part of the Northern Dynasties which appear in timelines of the continuous history of China. This disguises the diversity of the peoples and cultures who ruled China in the first millennium AD. Even the rulers of the Tang, often portrayed as the greatest 'Chinese' dynasty, descended from the northwest. The main sources for the history of this period were written by historians concerned to stress the continuity of China. It may be more interesting to look at the diversity.
- 15 Stein, Sand-Buried Ruins, 457.
- 16 Ibid. xviii. Li Yuchun led a Chinese team to excavate at Niya in 1959 and uncovered the grave of a couple. A decade of Sino-Japanese excavations since 1988 found many finely preserved bodies and grave goods, along with other structures and artefacts. See Ancient Corpses, 114-43 for an overview and illustrations.
- 17 And not only because of its physical resemblance: Stein was not the first to liken the sands of the Taklamakan to an ocean (cat. 21).
- 18 Stein, Ruins of Desert Cathay, 439-40.

THE RISE OF SOGDIAN MERCHANTS AND THE ROLE OF THE HUNS:

THE HISTORICAL
IMPORTANCE OF THE
SOGDIAN ANCIENT LETTERS

ÉTIENNE DE LA VAISSIÈRE

In 1907 Stein discovered a post bag containing a collection of letters, 'the Sogdian Ancient letters,' in the rubble of a ruined Chinese Han-dynasty (206 BC – AD 220) watchtower about 55 miles west of Dunhuang (Fig. 1). Their language was in 1911 identified as Sogdian, the language spoken by the iranophone populations living in the region of Samarkand and in the valleys between the Amu Darya (Oxus River) and Syr Darya (Jaxartes River). The first translation of these texts appeared in 1931 and a new edition is in preparation.¹

Some of the letters were fragmentary, but five were in sufficiently good condition to be dated (hereafter referred to as I-V). They all date from the same time and it is hypothesized that they were written in 313–14 when events in north China, described in II, took place as verified by other sources.² At this time, merchants travelling from Sogdiana to China crossed the Pamirs, traversed the kingdoms of Khotan and then Kroraina, near Lop Nor, before entering Chinese territory not far from where the letters were discovered. From Dunhuang the merchants entered Western Jin (265–316) territory and reached Central China – in disorder at this time – through the Hexi Corridor (present-day Gansu Province).

The texts were written by Sogdian traders in the Hexi Corridor, and four of them were probably destined for Kroraina. They contain unique information on the Sogdian communities of the entire region. But this is not their only claim to glory and few documents can be said to have had such a significant impact on knowl-

edge of fourth-century Central Asian history. Together with graffiti of the caravaneers in the high passes of Pakistan dating from the third to fifth centuries, these letters form the oldest body of surviving Sogdian texts. They are written in the oldest form of Sogdian language and script. Historically, these letters are also our main source of information about the origins of the greatest caravaneer network of the Asian interior from the High Middle Ages, that of the Sogdian traders. Finally, in describing the pillages which were then devastating northern China, the letters make incidental use of a word which would soon resonate throughout Europe: Xwn, the Huns.

As regards the history of trade, these letters can be read on two levels. While they all provide regional information on the Sogdian communities of the Hexi Corridor and Tarim Basin, II, the only one addressed to Samarkand, also contains more general information on the broader Sogdian network. This stretched from Sogdiana, around Samarkand, to the Chinese capitals: Chang'an and Luoyang. The letter's author, Nanai-vandak, had a network of correspondents in several Hexi villages and he provides information on the state of trade in China to correspondents in Samarkand, perhaps relatives who had written to ask if it was worth taking the route to the east: 'And, sirs, if I were to write to you everything about how China has fared, it would be beyond grief: there is no profit for you to gain from it.' The Sogdian community in Luoyang



Fig. 1 Ruined watchtower, T.Xii., on the Han-dynasty Chinese fortifications north-west of Dunhuang. The Sogdian letters were discovered by Stein in a rubbish pit between the base of this tower and the ruined wall of the watchmen's quarters. Photograph taken by Stein on his second Central Asian expedition, spring 1907. The British Library, Photo 190726(302).

had been seriously reduced by famine, but the Hexi communities appeared intact, says the text. The general tone of the writing is very gloomy, midway between a report and a will. Nanai-vandak entrusts the fate of one of his sons to one of his correspondents and seems to have abandoned the idea of ever seeing Samarkand again. Both are great merchants, exchanging news and goods — musk in II — as well as vital information for trade across several thousand kilometres.

The fact of this broad Sogdian network itself is entirely unexpected. Nothing in the Sogdian economy as revealed by archaeological excavations leads one to place Sogdiana in the role of a great urban civilization able to give birth to a class of great merchants. On the contrary, fourth-century Sogdian towns seem to have been of limited size. The largest, Erkurgan/Nasaf, in the south of present-day Uzbekistan (the Kashka Daria valley) covered 150 hectares. Samarkand occupied during this period only one third of the 220 hectares of its former size from the Achaemenid and Greek period. Artistic culture appeared similarly limited. Excavations do not identify contacts with foreigners but only, at the very most, regional exchanges. Sogdiana seems to have survived principally on agriculture and by contact with the nomads who set up camps and kurgans on the edge of the oases. It is only one century after the ancient Sogdian letters that one sees Sogdiana suddenly emerging from its economic torpor to become the main centre of wealth in western Central Asia.

Textual sources hardly provide a better understanding of the birth of this group of great Sogdian merchants. Some Chinese sources speak of merchants coming from the west to trade in China from the first century BC, but these are mainly Indians or Bactrians, subjects of the great Kushan empire which during the first three



Fig. 2 The remains of ancient Samarkand, Afrasiab, lie just north of the Islamic city and between spring and autumn excavations provide a grazing ground for the characteristic Central Asian Dumba – fat-tailed – sheep.

centuries AD extended its grip through the whole of southern Central Asia and north India, but not Sogdiana.³ The same applies to western sources: whether Ptolemy or the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, the texts highlight the importance of the crossroads of Bactria – south of Sogdiana – and make no mention of any Sogdian commercial role.⁴ But there are some references in Chinese dynastic histories to the merchants of Kangju 康居 – a nomadic state which

made up part of Sogdiana - disguised as ambassadors and trying to establish commercial links with China.5 These alone provide a textual antecedent to the text of II and enable the dating of the first Sogdian enterprises with China to be linked to the first century BC. It is then necessary to wait more than two centuries to find another significant reference to the Sogdians in China: in AD 227, a Chinese text attributes an important political role to the heads of the Kushan and Sogdian communities of Wuwei 武威, capital of Hexi. The text does not state that these are trading communities, but one cannot imagine any other hypothesis.6

Sources are thus extremely scarce when one seeks to establish the existence of a broad Sogdian network in the fourth century. However, one can certainly form a hypothesis on the birth of this trade: namely that the Sogdian merchants learned their trade and came to China in the wake of the Kushans. The commercial vocabulary of all the ancient letters is full of Indian terms and the sixthcentury Chinese 'Biographies of Eminent Monks' - which gives details of the first monks who brought Buddhism to China - mentions Sogdians, from merchant families, who settled in India.7 The Kushan empire, rich and urbanized, must have been an emigrant land for the Sogdians who mixed with the Bactria and Taxila caravans and became the apprentices of these Kushan merchants.

Far removed from this broad view of the great merchants, the other letters allow an understanding of the daily life of the Sogdian caravaneers of Hexi. Certainly V mentions in passing the troubles stirring in China ('From inside (China) [I] hear worse - not better - (news) day by day.'), but what preoccupied the small merchant above all was the state of his stocks and the quantities of goods to be delivered to him. ('In Guzang (there are) 4 bundles of "white" for dispatch, and 2,500 (measures of) (?) pepper for dispatch, and a double prasthaka of n(..y)t, and 5 prasthakas of rysk and 1/2 stater of silver [...] I heard thus: Kharstrang [owed(?)] you 20 staters of silver, and he declared (?) thus: I (will) bring (?) (it). He gave me the silver, and I weighed it, and (there were only 4.5 staters altogether. I asked: if he [sent] 20 staters, why do you give me 4.5 staters?'). II mentions the dispatch to Samarkand of 32 glands of musk, capable of providing around 0.8 kg of pure musk. This is a fortune in both medieval and present-day prices: on the perfume market musk is valued between three and five times times its weight in gold, while at Dunhuang in the eighth century 0.8 kg of musk was worth 27 kg of pure silver.8 The dealings of the caravaneer in V are much more modest, although he still must be carrying around 40 kg of pepper (at least if the conversion of measures is correct), because he takes the trouble to detail the transactions leading to the acquisition of a few silver staters of 16 g each.

The juxtaposition of these texts is extremely valuable in understanding the functioning of the Sogdian communities in fourth-century Hexi. II shows the existence of representatives employed by the great merchants in the various towns: 'And, sirs, Armat-sach in Jiuquan is safe and well and Arsach in Guzang is safe and well. And, sirs, it is three years since a Sogdian came from

"inside" [i.e. from China]. I settled Ghotam-sach, and he is safe and well.' V shows the activity of small caravaneers in the service of sartapao, the caravan leaders. The role of the latter is important: when, in the sixth and seventh centuries, the Chinese administration decided to integrate the Sogdian elites into the Chinese official hierarchy, Sogdian community leaders were given the title sabao 薩寶, the Chinese transcription of sartapao.9 I and III also contain family information: they are written by the wife of a Sogdian merchant during his three-year absence in distant parts. She complains to her mother and husband about being left alone in Dunhuang. She seems to be under the authority of her family, with hardly any autonomy at all, even though she is responsible for her husband's affairs in Dunhuang (cats. 191-2).

The reference to a priest in I shows that the Sogdian community of this town was sufficiently important to have a place of worship and a serving priest. 'Authorities' ('yps'r) and a 'tax-collector' (\beta'zkr'm) are cited and might have referred to the Sogdian community's internal organization. The numbers mentioned in II - 100 free men of Samarkand in an unknown Chinese town, and forty men in another town - in any case provide evidence of numerous sizeable communities. These communities are without doubt formed mainly by merchants and caravaneers, as attested by the letters, but it is possible that they also comprise groups of peasants seeking virgin land: in V, there is mention of a group of 'blacks', very poor, who were trying to return to the west. These are perhaps peasants, traditionally dubbed 'blacks' throughout Central Asia. Other sources, albeit three centuries later, reveal numerous examples of Sogdian peasants creating agricultural colonies in the east. 10 But it might also simply be a common tribal or family name.

The texts also provide information on inter-ethnic relations. III shows that the worst fate for a Sogdian abandoned at Dunhuang was to have to learn Chinese customs and work in service to the Chinese. A community member, Farnxunt, seems elsewhere to have had to hide from the Chinese police, over a debt, perhaps to do with trade. On the other hand, the Sogdian communities seemed to practise marriage with expatriate Indians and Bactrians in the Tarim Basin, since the mother of the Sogdian woman abandoned in Dunhuang bore an Indianized Bactrian name.11

The next Sogdian commercial document, a Sogdian contract found at Turfan and containing information on the structure of the Sogdian community in the town, is separated from the letters by more than three centuries of silence.¹² However, from the fifth century onwards, Chinese texts increasingly refer to the presence of the Sogdians, first in Hexi and then in the Chinese interior. In the Tarim Basin, numerous Chinese documents, preserved in the tombs of Astana cemetery, incidentally feature several hundred Sogdians among the daily life of the Chinese and Turkic population of the town and give us very valuable seventh- and eighthcentury details.

The Sogdians are the principal merchants of the High Middle Age, as much in China as in the Central Asian steppes, but without the letters, there would be nothing to suggest the extent of Sogdian caravan trade in the ancient period, or to enable an understanding of its origins. Equally, the letters have a huge historical importance for a reason which, although entirely different, eventually links back to trade history. The element which allows dating of these texts - the mention of the Xiongnu 匈奴 pillagers in north China at the start of the fourth century - also allows the establishment of a long-suspected but never proven link between the Xiongnu of old Chinese sources and the Huns unleashed on Europe from 370. The Xiongnu, nomadic horse-riders established from the fourth century BC on the northern boundaries of the area populated by Chinese, had been the great nomadic adversaries of the Chinese throughout antiquity. The Chinese finally managed to split them into several rival branches, some of which, very weakened, disappeared from the field of vision of Chinese sources after the second century AD (northern Xiongnu), while others (southern Xiongnu) settled in northern China in the region of Taiyuan and were brought under Chinese administrative rule. With the decline of Chinese power in the area at the end of the third century and start of the fourth, the Xiongnu tribes formed part of rival troops which pillaged north China and notably the great towns of Luoyang (311), Ye (307 and 313) and Chang'an (311). It is, without doubt, to these that the author of II makes reference. He calls the pillagers Xwn, the Sogdian transcription of the name which we write as 'Huns'. In the words of W. Henning, the first to have drawn attention to the historical interest of this text: 'In recent years there has been some considerable reaction, led by Maenchen-Helfen, against the firmly established but possibly naïve belief in the identity - in whatever terms conceived - of the Hsiung-nu [Xiongnu] of the Far East with the Hunni of Europe (with the Indian Hūṇa coming as a weak third); much doubt has been thrown on the identity of even the names. Yet here we find a name that is indistinguishable from that of the Hūna, Ovvvoi, Hunni, Arm. Honk', Saka Huna, Khwarezmian Hūn, employed not of nomads of vague definition, but actually of the genuine Far-Eastern Hsiung-nu [Xiongnu]. And, what is more remarkable still, this name [...] was in use well before the time when either the European Huns or the tribes that became known as Hū na to the Indians made their first appearance in history.'13

Maenchen-Helfen, archaeologist and art historian, has repeatedly maintained that the Xiongnu of East Asia are completely distinct from the Huns of Europe, thereby contesting the hypothesis formulated for the first time by de Guignes in 1758. At the time of Henning's challenge, he had just published several articles on the subject which were directly attacked by Henning's discovery. His response consisted of an attempt to trace the reference to Huns in II to the existence of a vast group of names resembling 'Hun' in a wide range of western sources, in order to show thereby that there were numerous examples of the usage of the word 'Hun' in cases which had nothing to do with the Xiongnu nor Huns and that therefore Huns was simply used in II as a generic name for Central Asian nomads.¹⁴

It is Maenchen-Helfen who has set the lead: it is true that he had an unrivalled knowledge of the material culture and perfectly demonstrated the considerable differences between what is known of Huns in the west (in terms of arms, costume, burials, human types, languages, jewels etc.) and the Xiongnu in the east. ¹⁵ He shows conclusively that the Huns in the west in fact form a conglomeration of extremely diverse peoples, even if he recognizes in passing the existence in their midst of an element from East Asia. By shifting the nub of the problem towards ethnographic data and not simply textual data, he has greatly advanced research.

Nonetheless, the fact that Maenchen-Helfen rejects the evidence of II is still extremely surprising: there is no comparison between an extremely precise first-hand account – that of II – with the texts of Greek geographers who had only heard of the Xiongnu, or whoever else, through countless intermediaries. One cannot doubt that II is well-informed, contrary to all the other references cited by Maenchen-Helfen.

Furthermore, II is not the only Central Asian source of that time making the equivalence between Hun and Xiongnu. The Buddhist translations by Zhu Fahu (空法護 Dharmarakṣa), a Kushan monk from Dunhuang, renders Hūṇa as Xiongnu in his 280 translation of the Tathāgataguhya-sūtra from Sanskrit to Chinese and again in his 308 translation of Lalitavistara. The Sogdians had known the Xiongnu since the spread of the latter's empire to west Central Asia in the second century BC and the ancestors of the Kushan had been among the first victims of this expansion: strong reasons would be needed to assume that the Sogdian merchant or the Kushan monk from Dunhuang had not given the Xiongnu their real names.

But the texts do not imply that the Huns of Europe or Central Asia after AD 350 are themselves descendants of the Xiongnu. The name 'Huns', used precisely to describe the southern Xiongnu who pillaged north China in the fourth century, could have been subsequently reused by very different nomadic peoples. This is the case in eighth-century Sogdiana, where the Turks are sometimes called Xwn. 16 It is clear that, by this time, 'Hun' has become a generic name in the west, as in Central Asia, to represent barbarism, but this does not at all explain why II uses it before this period. 17 The generic name did not come from nowhere. Maenchen-Helfen has further suggested that the Sogdian word Xwn might be seen as a derivative of the Avestic Xyon, the mythical adversaries from Iran. 18 But this hypothesis fails to take any account of the Indian Hūna. The only other explanation is that Xwn is the transcription of the name of a real people. So Xwn, if it is not a perfect transcription of Xiongnu (pronounced then χi wong nuo), is no less strong for that. One cannot see which other people it could refer to, known both to the Sogdians and the Indians.

What our merchant could not foresee and what Maenchen-Helfen forgot to analyze, is that there are references to Xiongnu in the west, that is, in Central Asia, after II and that the subsequent flowering of Sogdian history stems from this presence. Not so much in the east: the letters certainly describe a commercial network ruined in central China, but intact and active in Hexi and Central Asia. The ruination lasts the best part of the fourth century but in 439, one learns that there are numerous Sogdian merchants in the large towns of northern China. From there, the Sogdian network developed until it completely dominated the great land trade between China and Central Asia until the middle of the eighth century. It is not in the east but in the west that the Huns reintervened in Sogdian history.

The history of the Wei dynasty in China, the Weishu, using information datable between 437 and 457, states: 'Formerly, the Xiongnu killed the king [of Sogdiana] and took the country. King Huni is the third ruler of the line, 19 which suggests the Xiongnu invasion of Sogdiana took place in the second half of the fourth century. Here again, there is hardly any room to doubt this firsthand account, taken either from the report of an official Chinese envoy in Central Asia in 437, Dong Wan 董琬, or from the reports of Sogdian embassies in 457. Meanwhile, a bit further south, the Sogdian caravaneers' graffiti in Pakistan²⁰ frequently uses the forename or surname Xwn, while it no longer exists in subsequent writings (Chinese documents from Turfan), thereby demonstrating the presence of invading Huns in Sogdiana and the fusion of the populations during a precise period. 21 II demonstrates that the Xiongnu and the Huns can be equated until the start of the fourth century. The testimony of the Weishu and the appearance of the name 'Hun' in the inscriptions of Central Asia shows that this equivalence remains valid to the fifth century, the full Hunnic period, and that the name of the Huns is a precise referrant and not generic.

The Huns thus consciously followed the Xiongnu, affirming their heritage among a conglomeration of diverse peoples in which they were an ethnic minority (with Maenchen-Helfen) but which they dominated politically. This is the only hypothesis which can account for all known facts. In this framework, II is a key witness to the history of migrations in fourth century Asia.

This invasion and those which followed overturned the sedentary economy of Central Asia. Bactria, ravaged until the middle of the fifth century as much by nomadic offensives as by the vigorous Sasanid resistance, disappeared as a principal centre of population and wealth. All the archaeological facts confirm the idea of a strong decline in the region during a period from the second half of the fourth to the sixth century: total or partial abandonment of irrigation networks and sites, and their pillage and burning. It is the heart of the economic power of the Bactrian merchants which ends with the period of the letters. A little later, north-west India in its turn fell victim to the same phenomena. Sogdiana on the contrary was rapidly conquered and recovered relatively easily. The nomadic aristocracies (Huns in the second half of the fourth century, then Kidarites from 440, Hephthalites at the start of the sixth century, and finally Turks after 557) settled in Sogdiana and benefited the country with the produce of their pillage. The towns and villages revived and were repopulated; Sogdiana became the main market of Central Asia and the Sogdian merchants ceased being simple intermediaries between China, Persia or Byzantium, but benefited also from an internal market.²² In other words, the Huns' invasions in Central Asia gave way to the sole domination of the Sogdians on the caravan routes of Central Asia.

Translated by Kate Hampson

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NOTES

- 1 The manuscripts are in the British Library, Or. 8212/92-101. Two key letters have already been retranslated: Ancient Letter II, the most important (Sims-Williams, "Sogdian Ancient Letter II") and V (Grenet, Sims-Williams, de la Vaissière, "Sogdian Ancient Letter V").
 - All citations of these texts come from the new translations. For the other translations see Reichelt, *Die soghdischen Handschriftenreste*, completed by Henning, "Sogdian Ancient Letters" and Sims-Williams in this catalogue (cats. 191, 192).
- 2 See Grenet and Sims-Williams, "The Historical Context".
- 3 Hanshu, 96A.3886, transl. Hulsewé, China in Central Asia, 109.
- 4 Ptolemy, Geography, I 11 5-6, Periplus, § 64 transl. Casson, 91.
- 5 Hanshu, 96A.3893, transl. Hulsewé, China in Central Asia, 128.
- 6 de la Vaissière, Histoire, 66.
- 7 Gao seng zhuan, transl. Shih.
- 8 de la Vaissière, Histoire, 58-59.
- 9 de la Vaissière and Trombert, "Des Chinois et des Hu".

- 10 Ibid
- 11 Sims-Williams, "The Sogdian Merchants", 52.
- Japanese edition and translation: Yoshida and Moriyasu, French translation: de la Vaissière, Histoire, 165-66.
- 13 Henning, "Sogdian Ancient Letters", 615.
- 14 Maenchen-Helfen, "Pseudo-Huns".
- 15 Maenchen-Helfen, The World of the Huns.
- 16 Grenet, "Les 'Huns'".
- 17 Sinor, "The Hun Period", made the same error.
- 18 He rejects the work of Bailey, "Harahuna" but without being able to develop his theory as far as Bailey, whose hypotheses, unlike his own, saw the Avestic Xyon as a real tribe, surviving until the end of antiquity.
- 9 Weishu, 102.2270. Enoki, "Sogdiana", 44.
- 20 Sims-Williams, Inscriptions of the Upper Indus, 80.
- 21 de la Vaissière, Histoire, 103-13.
- 22 de la Vaissière, Histoire, chap. IV.

HOW MUCH FOR A CAMEL?

A New Understanding of Money on the SILK ROAD BEFORE AD 800

HELEN WANG

The prefectures and commanderies through which the foreign merchants passed were wearied by their welcoming and sending off, the expense for which ran into hundreds of millions.¹

earied? We are more accustomed to positive thoughts about 'the Silk Road', to the popular images of sundrenched cities prospering with the fruits of long-distance trade in luxury goods. Silk, as China's most famous invention and export commodity, inspires thoughts of luxury, beauty and strength. A road links one place to another, in real terms or as metaphor, and the term 'Silk Road' conveniently skirts the more complex issues of political authority, military frontiers, and religious, ethnic and cultural diversity. The abstract concept of 'the Silk Road' is instantly accessible, but the reality it masks is more difficult to grasp. The same is true for the concept of 'money.' So many of the popular histories of the Silk Road throw in the odd coin or piece of silk as a token gesture to the mechanics of trade, political and military administration and skip fluently on to the next chapter.

By examining the archaeological and documentary evidence found in present-day Xinjiang and Gansu Province in China, I have been working towards establishing a new framework for money in Eastern Central Asia before 800.² This paper is a summary of the results. The evidence from coins and contemporary documents from sites in the region allows us to focus in and out of particular places at particular times. It is, however, far more difficult to see the whole picture, largely owing to the dynamics – political, economic, social, cultural and religious – of those places at those times.

The new framework reflects the changes that took place in Eastern Central Asia during much of the first millennium. But money does not only reflect changes, it also stimulates them and can act as an 'incredibly powerful agent of profound social and cultural transformations'.3 If Simnel saw money as the principal catalyst for the transformation of social life, and Marx saw money as the result of production for exchange, both associated it with the growth of individualism and the erosion of traditional ways and structure of a community.4 A well-known illustration of such erosion can be seen in Mary Douglas's study of the money systems of the Lele people in the Belgian Congo, particularly the penetration of colonial coins into the exchange systems formerly associated with cloth money.5 In a seminal study, Paul Bohannan also demonstrated that when Western money was first introduced to West Africa, the indigenous people accepted it, yet resisted its impact on their traditional systems.6 Can similar questions be asked of money on the Silk Road? How did the 'foreign money' or 'foreign coins' that came to Eastern Central Asia integrate with the indigenous systems of exchange? And to what degree did the arrival of that money affect those indigenous systems?

These are important questions, but ones that are difficult to answer. Money on the Silk Road is a complex subject and requires a multi-disciplinary approach. The first striking difficulty is the lack of reliable historical references. Very little is known about money in the various kingdoms in Eastern Central Asia before the arrival of the Chinese. Even during the Western Han period (206 BC - AD 24), when the Chinese gained substantial knowledge of the region, the picture is still by no means clear. The Chinese references concerned with Eastern Central Asia during the Western Han period present intelligence gathered on the various kingdoms: whether the peoples were settled, semi-settled or nomadic, and the natural produce and manufactured products of those kingdoms. The Chinese histories of this period, Shiji and Hanshu, introduce fifty-one kingdoms, of which twenty-six had over 1,000 men able to take up arms, yet the only references to coins are to those issued in Jibin (Kashmir), Wuyishanli (Herat) and Anxi (Parthia). In Jibin 'they use gold and silver to make coins, with a mounted rider on the obverse and a human head on the reverse'; in Wuyishanli 'the obverse of the coin is exclusively that of a human head, with a mounted rider on the reverse'; in Anxi 'they use silver to make coins, the obverse being decorated exclusively with the king's face and the reverse with that of his consort'.7 To the Chinese, these were all foreign coins. The overwhelming lack of information about coins elsewhere in Eastern Central Asia in these historical texts suggests several possibilities: that most of the states did not use coins; that the reporters did not see or hear about coins there; that the coins in common use were Chinese coins and therefore did not

stand out as being different or worth reporting; or that the references to the foreign coins were later insertions, as Hulsewé suggested, the results of travellers' tales among the rich in the capital.⁸

Archaeological evidence has, however, provided a much richer source, both in the form of coins themselves and in contemporary documentary evidence largely ignored in previous surveys of coins of the region. With regard to the different aspects of money and how it was used, this evidence opens up many possibilities for a new understanding of money on the Silk Road.

The coin evidence

The impact of Chinese coins in Eastern Central Asia cannot be underestimated. According to Chinese sources, the history of Eastern Central Asia alternated between Chinese and non-Chinese control, and to a large extent this is reflected in the coin evidence. Chinese coin-types are found of the periods when there was strong Chinese authority, and there is also strong evidence of local production of Chinese-style coins after the Chinese withdrawal.

The majority of coins found are Chinese or local issues made in the Chinese-style: cast in bronze, with a square hole in the centre and with a two- or four-character inscription arranged around the hole. The earliest Chinese coins found are the *banliang* 半兩 ('half-liang') and wuzhu 五銖 ('five zhu' or 'five grains', Fig. 1 and cat. 34). Both are named after their inscriptions, which refer to their original weight (one *liang* weighed 15.25 grammes, and comprised 24 zhu). In 621 the Chinese Tang dynasty (618–907) replaced the wuzhu coin with the Kaiyuan tongbao 開元通寶 coin (Fig. 2



Fig. 1 Bronze Chinese wuzhu coin, 1st-2nd century AD.

The inscription means 'five grains' and refers to the weight of the coin. Wuzhu coins and local imitations were widely used throughout Eastern

tions were widely used throughout Eastern Central Asia until the seventh century AD. The British Museum, Stein.AK.XIV.a.i.



Fig. 2 Bronze Kaiyuan tongbao coin, issued in central China from 621.

The Kaiyuan tongbao coin represented the start of a new Chinese coinage. First issued in 621, the Kaiyuan tongbao was in general use in Gaochang c.700, and its influence was felt throughout East Asia.

The British Museum, OR.6822



Fig. 3 Bronze Chinese wuzhu coins, clipped wuzhu coins and imitations.

These coins were found at Rawak, near Khotan. They had corroded together, as though there had once been a string through the central holes.

The British Museum, Stein.AK,XI.o.27-31.d

and cat. 39b), and after this date most Chinese coins have a fourcharacter inscription indicating the reign name. In addition to the Chinese coins there are foreign coins made in the Western tradition: struck in gold, silver or bronze, and with a pictorial design. There are also coins made locally in Eastern Central Asia, modelled on the Chinese and/or Western traditions.

There is no evidence for the use of any coins in Eastern Central Asia before the arrival of the Chinese. It is important then to consider how, and from where, Chinese coins arrived in the region. The obvious route was through the Hexi Corridor (now Gansu Province), an area of such strategic importance that whoever controlled it also controlled land communications between China and Central Asia. Indeed, it is believed that the Qin were able to create the first centralized state in China at least in part owing to their control of trade with Central Asia through the Wei and Tao valleys.10 During the Qin dynasty (221-07 BC) there was large-scale building of defensive walls in eastern Gansu, at massive human, material and financial expense. Excavations of large quantities of Oin banliang coins further reflect the importance of eastern Gansu as a stronghold of the Qin state and empire. Western Gansu was split among non-Chinese peoples whose economy was largely livestock based. As a whole, Gansu escaped the wars further east, and at the beginning of the Han dynasty in 206 BC had a stable foundation on which to develop economically. Early Han banliang coins have been found throughout Gansu along with a stone mould for their casting, providing clear evidence that banliang coins were being made here during the early Western Han period.11

Archaeologists have also uncovered hundreds of thousands of Han dynasty wuzhu coins throughout Gansu, and the discovery of bronze moulds for their casting provides further evidence that wuzhu coins were being produced here. However, there is very little evidence for local coin production in Eastern Central Asia during the Western Han period. Zhang Qian's 張騫 missions (139 BC and 115 BC) apparently brought back scant information about local currencies. After the Chinese military victory over Ferghana in 101 BC, many of the smaller Eastern Central Asian kingdoms sent envoys to the Chinese court to establish tribute arrangements. As the frequency of communications increased, more Chinese farming colonies were established to ensure adequate food supplies for Chinese troops, visiting officials and merchants, and chains of watch towers and beacons were built to mark and guard the routes. Chinese attacks on the Xiongnu continued until 60 BC when the Xiongnu ruler submitted.12 Eastern Central Asia came under Chinese control and was known to the Chinese as 'the Western Regions' (Xiyu 西域). A protectorate was established with its headquarters at Wulei (near modern-day Luntai), at the approximate centre. The post of Protector-General (duhu 相減) took orders directly from the Chinese government. High-level posts were introduced under his charge and they and all the leaders of the various kingdoms who acknowledged Chinese rule received a seal of authority. The existence of the Protector-General served to confirm, rather than invalidate, the authority of the local leaders and their officials who had received Chinese titles, seals and ribbons of office.13

It is very difficult to determine the exact situation of Chinese money in Eastern Central Asia during the Western Han period. Some Western Han banliang and wuzhu coins have been found in the region, but the majority have been found alongside wuzhu coins of the Eastern Han period (AD 25-220). It is not unreasonable to suppose that most of the Western Han coins found in Eastern Central Asia arrived with Eastern Han coins. The only possible exceptions are the Western Han coins found at Loulan, which are associated with military supplies, and perhaps also the Western Han coins found at liaohe (Yarkhoto).

It is possible to examine the Eastern Han coins found in Eastern Central Asia with a little more confidence. Large quantities of wuzhu and clipped wuzhu coins (Fig. 3 and cat. 34) have been found. The Hanshu records that many kingdoms in the Western Regions had developed their own metallurgy, 14 and wuzhu coins although no moulds - have been found at metalworking sites. It is therefore significant that the major hoards of wuzhu coins have been found in the two regions which are known to have produced coins locally: Khotan and Kucha.

A number of important changes were taking place in Khotan in the first century AD. Among these, we know that between c.AD 30-150 the kings of Khotan issued their own coins (Fig. 4 and cat. 36).15 These were the bilingual Sino-Kharosthī coins, with an inscription on one side in the Kharosthī script, and a Chinese inscription on the other side. The Kharosthī inscription names the king in whose name the coin was issued. The Chinese inscription gives its weight. The Sino-Kharosthī coins were issued in three denominations: 24 zhu (grain), 6 zhu and a smaller, rarer, 3 zhu coin. The ratio of 4:1, the use of the Kharosthi script to name the issuer, the fact that they were struck rather than cast, and the choice of a horse or camel in the pictorial design all suggest that these coins were modelled on the reduced Attic tetradrachm and drachm of Bactria. The kings of Khotan intended that these coins should closely reflect the coins of the early Kushan rulers of Bactria and northwest India (Fig. 5 and cat. 35). Indeed, some of the Sino-Kharosthī coins were overstrikes on a small number of early Kushan copper drachms. It was convenient that in the first century AD the Bactrian reduced Attic tetradrachm and the Han liang were virtually identical in weight. The bilingual elements and the comparative weights suggests that the Sino-Kharosthī coins were designed to fit both systems. This is a clear indication of the changes and adaptations taking place, as Khotan felt the influences from both northwest India and China and developed its own identity.16

While the Sino-Kharosthī coins of Khotan combined Western and Chinese coin traditions, those produced at Kucha followed more closely the Chinese tradition. Coin production here appears to have been prompted by the need to maintain coinage in Eastern



Central Asia following the Chinese withdrawal from the region in the early second century, and the collapse of the Han dynasty in 220. Following this, the three strongest economic regions in China emerged as the Three Kingdoms of Wei, Wu and Shu (220–65). Chinese political influence in Eastern Central Asia declined, but Gansu remained under the Wei kingdom (220–65), the strongest of the Three Kingdoms. In contrast to the local production of coinage at Kucha, there was an interesting reversal in central China during the early years of Wei rule when no coins were issued, and grain and textiles were used as money. Tater, although the wuzhu system was restored in 227, the political situation in central China fragmented further, and in much of northern China coins were not used.

However, in Eastern Central Asia coin production appears to have taken place on a very large scale in the Qiuci Kingdom (present-day Kucha) and the Chinese-style coins made here are known as 'Qiuci 龜茲 coins'. They fall into three broad groups: 'Qiuci small coins' are the smallest and have no outer rim or inscription; 'Qiuci wuzhu coins' are modelled on Chinese wuzhu coins; and 'Qiuci script coins' have a wuzhu inscription and a local inscription (Fig. 6). Exact dates for these different groups are difficult to determine: it is likely that they were produced between the third to seventh centuries (i.e. between the Han and Tang dynasties), and as they have been found together with Tang (618-907) coins it can be assumed that they remained in circulation until the seventh or eighth century. It would seem that after the collapse of the Han dynasty, small Chinese coins arrived in Qiuci, probably as a result of close links between this religious and commercial centre and Hexi. Qiuci had broken free from Xiongnu control in the second century, and this kingdom continued to grow in strength until the Chinese returned to dominate Eastern Central Asia again in the seventh century. The Qiuci coins reflect this growth.

There is also evidence for the use of gold and silver coins in Eastern Central Asia before the eighth century. Although early reports of Chinese missions to the west tell of gifts of gold and describe the gold and silver coins in use to the west of the Pamirs, the earliest physical evidence of gold and silver coins in Eastern Central Asia are the Byzantine gold solidi and Sasanian and Arab-Sasanian silver drachms (cat. 37b) and their respective imitations (Figs. 7 and 8). ¹⁹ These are found almost exclusively in the Turfan

Fig. 4 Bronze Sino-Kharoşthî tetradrachm issued by Gurgamoya, king of Khotan, mid-1st century AD.

The Chinese side of this coin has an inscription stating that it is a coin weighing 24 grains. The Kharosthi side of the coin features a horse surrounded by an inscription which names the king.

The British Museum, Stein.S.IV.D.a.1

Fig. 5 Bronze drachm issued by the Kushan king Wima Takhto (ε .80–110) in Kashmir.

The design of this coin features a camel on one side and a bull on the other. The inscription, in the Kharosthi script, names the king. The British Museum. Stein.AK.II.a.1 area. While they indicate that such international precious metal currencies were known in the region, there is no guarantee they were each being used in the same way. Only a handful of gold coins (mostly imitations) are known, and these are from tombs at Astana, suggesting that they were used as part of the burial assemblage. Over 1,000 silver coins are known, and these were found in tombs at Astana and at the Gaochang city site. The find of a single large hoard of 947 Sasanian and Arab-Sasanian silver coins along with thirteen gold bars in a rock crevice near Wuqia, in north-western Xinjiang, was exceptional, and indicates one route by which gold and silver were brought into the region, probably by Central Asian merchants. It is known that the Gaochang kingdom enjoyed close relations with the Western Turks, and that Sogdians acted as intermediaries between Byzantium and the Western Turks. It would therefore seem that Sogdians carried gold to the Western Turks, who then took it on to Gaochang. Most of the Sasanian coins found in Eastern Central Asia fall into two distinct groups: those of the fourth century and those of the late sixth and early seventh centuries. This contrasts with the dates of Sasanian coins found in central China, where about eighty percent are issues of the late fifth century. These three distinct periods reflect the great outputs of Sasanian coinage in ancient Iran, during the reigns of Shapur II (309-79), Piruz (459-84) and Khusraw II (591-628). It is likely, therefore, that the Sasanian coins may have arrived in Eastern Central Asia and China by different routes at different periods, probably owing to different stimuli. It appears that the coins of the fourth century and the late sixth to early seventh century may have followed a route through to Qiuci and Gaochang. However, coins of the fifth and sixth centuries appear to have followed another route from Bactria-Wakhan across the Pamirs-Tashkurgan-Yarkand-Khotan-Kroraina, then eastwards either via Dunhuang, or through the Tsaidam Basin to the Koko Nor lake, then via Lanzhou into central China. Sasanian coins also arrived in China by maritime routes in the late fifth century.²⁰







The design of this coin is based on the Chinese wuzhu coin.

The wuzhu inscription is visible to the right and left of the hole, and a local Qiuci inscription has been added above and below the hole.

The British Museum, Stein,IA.X.V.a.8

Fig. 7 Gold imitation of a Byzantine solidus.

This piece was found in a tomb at the Astana cemetery, near Turfan.

Such pieces may have been made locally, and appear to have had
a decorative rather than a monetary function.

The British Museum, Stein-LAXILS.

Fig. 8 Silver Sasanian drachm issued by Khusraw II (590–628).

The Middle Persian abd ('excellent') is at the lower right of the coin.

The British Museum, 1933-4-11-190



At the beginning of the seventh century, there appears to have been some impetus among the states north of the Tarim Basin, particularly Qiuci and Gaochang, to issue bilingual or commemorative coins, namely the 'Qiuci script coins' and the Gaochang jili coins (Fig. 9 and cat. 39a). The inspiration may have come from the growth in use at Gaochang of the Sasanian silver coins which were completely different in appearance, design and script from the more familiar Chinese-style coins. The local script on the Qiuci coin may be derived from the Middle Persian abd, meaning 'excellent'. This is often found in addition to the expression Xvarrah abzūd, '(May his) glory (be) increased'. It became a standard feature of Sasanian coin design (Fig. 8) from the rule of Khusraw I (531–79).²¹ Similarly, the Chinese inscription on the Gaochang jili coins translates as 'Gaochang, auspicious, advantage'. It is likely that the Gaochang jili coins served a political and celebratory purpose. Following a coup d'état in Gaochang in 614, the ruler, Qu Baiya, and his son, Qu Wentai, sought refuge with the Western Turks. In 620 they succeeded in restoring their dynasty, with Qu Baiya as king and Qu Wentai in charge of administration, and began to use the new reign name 'Chongguang' meaning 'Double Glory'.22 The Gnochang jili coins were therefore probably issued to celebrate this restoration.

Although the new coins do not appear to have been made in great quantities, they nonetheless reflect the momentous political changes that were happening both to east and to west, and the desire by these states to create not just new coins, but coins that would reflect their independent political authority. In the east, the unification of the Chinese empire under the Sui dynasty (589–618) had ended almost 300 years of fragmented rule. The series of political changes further west were also far-reaching: the emergence of the Turks c. 560; the Byzantine-Sasanian wars; the unprecedented splendour of the Sasanian ruler Khusraw II, followed, in the 620s, by the defeat of Persians everywhere at the hands of the Byzantine armies of Heraclius, and the rise of the Arabs.

Following the reunification of China, the Sui dynasty reestablished the Yiwu (Hami), Shanshan and Qiemo prefectures in Eastern Central Asia in 610, and installed a Commandant of the Western Regions (Xiyu xiaowei 西域校尉) to represent the Sui court and manage military and administrative affairs there. The development of communications with this region was considered important enough for the Sui court to send the official Pei Ju 裴矩 (d.627) to Zhangye to supervise trading with the markets of the Western Regions, and to persuade the local leaders to pay tribute at the Sui court: 'The prefectures and commanderies through which the foreign merchants passed were wearied by their welcoming and sending off, the expense for which ran into hundreds of millions'.

Among the documents recovered from the Turfan area are contracts which confirm the sudden change c.700 from Sasanian silver coins to Chinese bronze coins, made possible by the arrival of sufficient Tang dynasty Kaiyuan tongbao coins into Eastern Central Asia, about eighty years after they were first issued in China (621),

and sixty years after the Chinese took control of Gaochang (640). The abrupt change in coinage can be seen as a political development. The impact of the Kaiyuan tongbao was, like the wuzhu coinage, far-reaching. Supply of coins, or at least master specimens from which local issues might be cast, appears to have been good. Qianyuan zhongbao 乾元重寶 coins were first issued in central China in 758 during the An Lushan rebellion (cats. 39 c-e). In the 760s the Tibetans dominated the Hexi Corridor, severing communications between central China and Eastern Central Asia, and isolating the Chinese protectorates at Anxi and Beiting for almost twenty years. Yet the Anxi mint was able to produce local issues of Chinese Kaiyuan and Qianyuan coins and, independently of central China, to create coins for the Dali 大歷 (766-79) and Jianzhong 建中 (780-83) reign periods (Fig. 10 and cats 39 f-g). The distribution of these coins, like the wuzhu coins, indicates that they were widely known and used in Eastern Central Asia.

The documentary evidence

It is fortunate that large quantities of contemporary documentary evidence have survived, as these show very clearly the different forms of money in different regions and how they were used.²⁴ The following summary is the result of studying Chinese woodslip documents from the Juyan sites (first century BC to fourth century AD),²⁵ Kharoṣṭhī documents from Niya (third to fourth centuries),²⁶ Chinese paper documents from Turfan (fourth to eighth centuries),²⁷ Tocharian documents from Kucha (seventh century),²⁸ Chinese and Khotanese documents from Khotan (seventh to eighth centuries),²⁹ and Tibetan documents from various sites (eighth to ninth centuries).³⁰

Chinese Han period documents excavated at Juyan in Inner Mongolia reveal that official salaries at the borders were reckoned monthly, and that salary payments were sometimes in coin and sometimes in textiles. On a small number of documents the sources of the coins and textiles from central China are indicated. However, these all refer to arrears of salary payments, and the sources are the storehouses in the capital city and prefectures. They show that the Han government was prepared to send out coins and textiles over very long distances when local sources were insufficient. The special attention paid to these temporary supplements (their origins were recorded at every stage) indicates that their supply was exceptional rather than regular (those for regular salary payments were not usually recorded). This suggests that in normal circumstances there were probably sufficient reserves of coins and textiles to meet the salary payments. However, a number of documents indicate that salaries were not paid strictly every month: some show accumulated pay over several months; and others show payments partially reduced on account of a previous advancement. Clearly, there were not always sufficient reserves to pay all the salaries monthly. The documentary evidence from the Juyan sites reveals that coins, grain and textiles were important forms of money at this Chinese settlement. Officials at the border were paid in coins or



Fig.9 Bronze Gaochang jili coin, issued in Gaochang, early 7th century.

Gaochang jili means 'Gaochang, auspicious, advantage'. These coins were probably issued in the 620s to celebrate the restoration of the Qu clan to power in Gaochang.

The British Museum, Stein.IA.X.d.4



Fig. 10 Bronze Dali yuanbao coin, made at the Anxi mint, in the late 8th century.

These coins were made during the Dali reign period (766–79) after the Tibetans had severed communications between central China and Eastern Central

The British Museum, Stein.IA.XVI.c.3

textiles. In the latter case, the quality and dimensions of the textiles were specified, and in documents relating to salary payments, the equivalent value of the textiles was given in coin. One fragment from Dunhuang reveals that in the late first/early second century one roll of plain silk had a value of 600 Chinese coins (qian 錢), which was equivalent to one month's salary for an official at the rank of captain (hou 候). If this calculation can be seen as a convention, then the inscription on the silk would confirm that plain silk was reckoned by weight at twenty-four coins per liang, and by length at 150 coins per zhang 丈, and that these were standard equivalents, adjustable by means of premiums or discounts.

Although both coin and documentary evidence suggests that coins were widely used throughout Eastern Central Asia, the documentary evidence from Niya offers unique information concerning money and economic life in one kingdom of Eastern Central Asia where Chinese coins were known but were not widely used. Niva lay between the important centres at Kroraina and Khotan, both of which have yielded large quantities of Chinese coins, suggesting they were in general use there. Yet the Kharosthi documents from Niya suggest very limited use of Chinese coins at this site, and moreover that the people who used Chinese coins were those who had contact with outsiders. Niya (see pp. 169-70), was an indigenous settlement, and day-to-day affairs were not subject to a Chinese administration. Although it lay between important sites on the southern route and although there was frequent communication with Khotan and Kroraina both by the people of Niya and other travellers along that route, it would appear that Chinese coins were known and used in Niya in addition to other more established media of exchange. In the Kharosthī documents the value of goods was often expressed in muli. For example, the price of a camel at Niya was 30-42 muli. While the nature of muli itself has yet to be confirmed, it appears to have been a general measure of value, and unit of account. But although the value was expressed in muli, the actual payments were made in various forms. The Kharosthī documents indicate that the indigenous people regularly engaged in exchange of goods. Indeed, the secular documents from Niya concern court rulings on disputes, contracts of sale, records of loans, tax collection, hire and rent (cats. 74-7). There are sufficient examples of these activities to confirm patterns of exchange of carpets, textiles, grain and animals, and to determine a hierarchy (albeit hazy) of items used in payments. Grain was an important medium of exchange, and was used to buy camels. Camels were the most common form of payment for slaves. Horses, camels, carpets, corn and wine were used to purchase land. Fines and penalties were paid in horses, cows, carpets and textiles.

Turning to Turfan, most of the Chinese documents from this region have come from the cemeteries at Astana and Gaochang, both associated with the Gaochang kingdom (see pp. 308–9). Many of these are contracts concerning the purchase of land, houses and slaves; loans of grain, textiles and coins; rent of land and hiring of labour. With these contracts there is no doubt that in Gaochang in the sixth and seventh centuries prices were given in silver coins. From the evidence of the contracts alone, the following patterns emerge. From the late third century to the early sixth century, silk

and carpets were the main forms of money for purchases, loans and hiring labour. After the establishment of the Gaochang kingdom in 502, textiles continued to be the main form of money for purchases and loans, although the types changed from silk and carpets to silk and cloth (cotton/linen). The use of carpets as media of exchange in the Khotan and Turfan regions indicates that these were wellestablished forms of money in Eastern Central Asia.31 The contracts from Turfan show that in the mid-sixth century a major change occurred, with silver coins and/or grain replacing textiles and carpets as the means of paying for loans, leases of land, and hiring of labour. There appears to have been a hierarchy, with silver coins preferred for transactions of superior quality. After the Chinese takeover of Gaochang in 640 there were further developments. Silver coins remained the superior form of money, but silk largely replaced grain as the secondary form. Labour was paid for in silver coins; purchases were paid for in silver coins and/or silk; and loans were made mostly in silver coins and silk. There is a sudden watershed c.700 when copper coins replaced silver coins. The coin evidence found at the sites indicates that the silver coins were Sasanian drachms or imitations, and the copper coins were Chinese coins or local issues in the Chinese style.

Gold coins are conspicuously absent from the Turfan contracts, and as most of the gold coins - Byzantine solidi and imitations - have been found in tombs (cat. 37a), it would seem that they were a special purpose money. Over forty tomb inventories, included as part of the burial assemblage, have been recovered from the Turfan region. Dated from 384 to the 640s, they show how gold and silver was measured in the region over the centuries: before the mid-sixth century gold and silver was measured by weight, and after the mid-sixth century by counting in units of gold and silver coins. The inventories dated 567-92 do not mention gold and silver at all. Indeed, the inventories of the early 590s list massive quantities of textiles instead. The break of over twenty years may appear significant, however, the contracts indicate that silver coins were being used in the 580s to pay for leases of land. In this respect, although the contracts and tomb inventories are largely contemporary, their evidence sometimes appears contradictory. However, this can be explained by regarding the contracts as evidence of actual everyday life and the tomb inventories as wishful thinking for the next life. 32 Gold coins do not feature in the contracts at all, yet the inventories indicate they were highly desired and that they represented purchasing power. Silver coins feature in both the contracts and the inventories. Silver first appears in the inventories in the early sixth century, reaching one million silver coins in 548, but does not appear in any form in the contracts until the 580s. Clearly, the knowledge of, and desire for, gold and silver coins preceded and remained far greater than their general availability.

The documents in Tocharian B, Khotanese and Tibetan, although fewer in number, generally confirm the use of Chinese, or Chinese-style, coins in the areas of Kucha and Khotan in the seventh and eighth centuries. These documents also throw light on

other aspects of money in the region. The Tocharian B documents from Kucha highlight the role of the monastery as a centre of economic life, and the mechanisms by which it functioned, also that large quantities of coins were in use. The Khotanese documents show the use of large quantities of Chinese coins and textiles south of the Tarim Basin. The Tibetan documents reveal how strings of Chinese coins and grain were the main forms of money during the Tibetan occupation, that coins were used for buying people and livestock, and grain was used for buying land and property, loans and hiring of labour. They suggest a far greater use of Chinese coins than was previously suspected.

In summary, the documentary evidence has revealed that coins were not the only form of money; that other forms, in particular textiles and grain, were also used. Taxation was also mentioned, and was usually payable in coin or local produce, in the form of grain, animals, or carpets and textiles. Loans, both in coin or in kind, were extremely common, and for various purposes: sometimes to finance travel for trade, sometimes just to tide a family over until the next harvest.

To conclude, there is no evidence for the use of any coins in Eastern Central Asia before the arrival of the Chinese during the Western Han period. Yet it is inconceivable that there was no exchange within and among the various kingdoms in this region. There must, at the very least, have been some exchange of goods, some system(s) whereby goods could be exchanged, and probably an established hierarchy of those goods or identifiable media of exchange and units of account. Indeed, after the arrival of the Chinese and other coins, the local systems continued to work on a multi-faceted basis. The documentary evidence from Eastern Central Asia provides many examples of natural produce and manufactured products in many different kinds of transactions involving payment or exchange, including purchases, loans, rent and taxation. Barter played a very important role, as manifested in the contracts that have survived.

It has been possible to identify from the coins and documents the various forms of money that were used in particular places at particular times, but it is not so easy to establish the hierarchies of those forms, or to determine which forms of money were more highly valued. Value systems can be difficult to identify even in living societies, and most works on economic anthropology warn strongly against interpreting money from inappropriate perspectives, such as from a Euro-centric viewpoint.³³ In this respect, it is extremely useful to compare the results of this study with the market intelligence acquired by the Russian army captain, Chokan Valikhanov (1835-65), in Eastern Central Asia and the adjacent regions of Kazakhstan and Kirghizstan in the 1850s. Over a millennium later than the period I have studied, Valikhanov described how the Kirghiz people did not go to trade in centres such as Kashgar and Yining. Instead, they set up temporary settlements (aul) each summer and winter to which caravans of merchants would bring goods from market centres such as Kashgar, Yining and

Tacheng. At the aul, all goods were bartered for sheep. But the prices in the market centres were expressed in terms of coins: for example, in Kashgar a sheep cost between 5-10 tangas, with an average price of 8 tangas. At the aul, merchants would barter their goods for sheep, and reckon their profits in terms of tangas. Russian goods were also bartered for sheep, but profits on these goods were reckoned in roubles. The sheep served as a kind of monetary unit equal to the silver rouble, where 1 sheep = 1 rouble; 1 lamb = 0.5 rouble; 1 sheep + 1 lamb = 1.5 roubles. The price in sheep of a cast-iron cauldron was calculated as follows: [circumference of the cauldron, measured in chetverts] - [3 chetverts] = price of cauldron. One chetvert measured 17.77 cm. A cauldron with a circumference of 11 chetverts would therefore cost 11-3 = 8 sheep. A Kirghiz at the aul could also buy on credit: he could buy something for one lamb on one occasion, and pay back double (i.e. one sheep) at the next occasion. These are just a few of the hundreds of examples which Federov has compiled from nine reports by Valikhanov.34 The examples show how goods were moved around, and that there were different media of exchange and different units of account in

different places. In the market centres of Kashgar, Yining and Tacheng, coins were an important unit of account. To the Kirghiz traders at the aul, sheep were the most important form of money. To the merchants from the market centres, sheep were just one of many forms of money. The relative values of different media of exchange were understood and there were norms of exchange rates. Although the data collected by Valikhanov in the 1850s has a different temporal context from the evidence presented in this paper, it nonetheless offers a very real perspective from which to view money on the Silk Road in a much earlier period, and thereby lends support to the results of this study.

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NOTES

- Suishu: juan 67: "Pei Ju zhuan".
- 2 The term Eastern Central Asia conveys the geographic location without the political and cultural associations inherent in the many other names for the region. Full details of the evidence discussed in this paper can be found in my book Money on the Silk Road.
- Parry and Bloch, Money and the Morality of Exchange, 3.
- Simnel, The Philosophy of Money; Marx, Das Kapital.
- Douglas, "Raffia Cloth Distribution", 109-22.
- Bohannan, "The Impact of Money", 491-503.
- Hanshu, juan 96A; Hulsewé, China in Central Asia, 106, 115, 117.
- Hulsewé, China in Central Asia, 27.
- Jiang, "Xinjiang gudai qianbi"; Dong and Jiang, Xinjiang Numismatics; Zeymal, "Eastern (Chinese) Turkestan"; Zhang, Zhongguo sichou zhi lu huobi; Thierry, Iran et la Chine.
- Eberhard, A History of China; Frank, The Centrality of Central Asia.
- Gansu qianbi xuehui, Gansu lishi huobi.
- Hanshu, juan 96A; Yü, "Han Foreign Relations", 411; Hulsewé, China in Central Asia, 73, 78.
- M. Loewe, quoted in Hulsewé, China in Central Asia, 64.
- Hanshu juan 96A and 96B; Hulsewé, China in Central Asia.
- Cribb, "The Sino-Kharosthi Coins". The dates of issue given in Cribb's article (c.AD 1-132) have been revised to c.AD 30-150 following recent finds and research on Kushan chronology; see Falk, "The yuga of Sphujiddhvaja"; and Cribb, "The Kushans".
- See Zhang and Rong, Yutian congkao; see also Bailey, The Culture of the Sakas.
- Peng, Zhongguo huobi shi, 240-46.
- Sanguozhi Weishu (Mingdiji). For a discussion of the numismatic evidence

- for wuzhu coins of the Wei kingdom, see Cao-Wei wuzhu keti zu, "Cao-Wei wuzhu kao".
- Thierry, "Sur les monnaies sassanides"; Skaff, "The Silver Sasanian Coins"; Thierry and Morrisson, "Sur les monnaies byzantines".
- Skaff, op.cit. I am grateful to Joe Cribb for his help on the Sasanian coins.
- I am grateful to Vesta Curtis for her help in determining this reading.
- Wang, Gaochang shigao.
- 23 Suishu, juan 67, "Pei Ju zhuan".
- 24 It is not practical here to give full references. Some references are given below; fuller details can be found in my Money on the Silk Road.
- References include Xie, Juyan Hanjian shiwen hejiao, and Gansu sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, Juyan xinjian.
- References include Burrow, Language of the Kharosthi Documents; and Burrow, A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents.
- References include Yamamoto and Ikeda, Tun-huang and Turfan Documents and Tang, Tulufan chutu wenshu.
- 28 References include Pinault, "Documents in Tocharian B".
- References include Skjaervø, Khotanese Manuscripts.
- References include Takeuchi, Old Tibetan Manuscripts.
- Jiang, Dunhuang Tulufan, 67, suggests that zhan-carpets were one of the many goods sold by Sogdian merchants in the markets in mainland China.
- The tomb inventories may be related to the paper offerings representing gold, silver, coins and textiles - that were burned (and continue to be burned today) for the benefit of the ancestors in the spirit world. Tang Lin's Mingbaoji of the seventh century is the earliest record of this custom, which was already well established by then. See Hou, Monnaies d'offrande, 5-8, for details,
- Plattner, Economic Anthropology, Gregory, Savage Money.
- 34 Federov, "The Works and Archive".

IRANIANS, INDIANS, CHINESE AND TIBETANS:

THE RULERS AND RULED OF KHOTAN IN THE FIRST MILLENNIUM

PRODS OKTOR SKJÆRVØ

The kingdom of Khotan near the western end of the Southern Silk Road was founded, according to legends reported in two Tibetan and two Chinese sources, during the reign of the Maurya king Aśoka (c. 272–31 BC) in India, but no mention is made of Iranians in these legends. In three of the legends the Indian population of Khotan mingles with a Chinese group, a piece of information that is confirmed to some extent by the earliest archaeological records from Khotan and the neighbouring area, which contain evidence both for a strong Buddhist presence and for the existence of a mixed population of Chinese and others. Of special importance are a number of coins found at the site of Yotkan – according to Aurel Stein the ancient capital of Khotan – and elsewhere in the kingdom. These coins, which have been dated to the first century of our era, have legends in both Kharoṣṭhī script and Chinese (see p. 27 and cats. 36a–f).²

The four legends tell how the first indigenous king of Khotan was born from the earth. This is, apparently, an attempt to explain the Indian name of Khotan – Gostana (attested in Khotanese texts as Gaustaṃ) – the literal meaning of which might seem to be 'earth breast' (Tibetan Sa-nu). This cannot be the correct explanation of the name, however, only a popular etymology. The Khotanese form is attested as Hvatana in one of the oldest manuscripts of the Suvarnabhāsottama-sūtra, 'Sutra of Golden Light', probably from the fifth to sixth centuries. The earliest Chinese form is Yutian

于闐, common in the early dynastic annals. This form is from an original *Hwa(h)den, which agrees well with the indigenous Khotanese form, as well as with the form U-then for the capital city of the country of Khotan in the Tibetan annals of Khotan. Later, Hetian 和闐 became the common name in Chinese.³

The Iranians may have occupied Khotan at any time before the third century AD, although it is not possible to conclude from the references to Khotan in the Chinese histories, beginning in about 140 BC, nor from the legends, whether or not the inhabitants were Iranians. The earliest tangible proof comes from third-century Kharosthī documents discovered at Niya and neighbouring sites. One document from Endere is a letter from the king of Khotan, in which his title and name are given as Khotana maharaya rayatiraya hinajha Vijida Simha (cat. 28).4 The word hinajha is Khotanese for 'general' and is found in Khotanese translations of Buddhist sutras, where it is used to render Indic senāpati. The title of the royal house of Khotan is here seen in its Indic form Vijita; it is also known from Tibetan as Bijaya, and in eighth-tenth century Khotanese it was Viśya, later Viśa'. In the Chinese sources the dynastic title of the Khotanese kings is attested as Yuchi 尉遲, which is presumably the same word.5

Khotan was an early centre of Buddhism and was visited over several centuries by Chinese Buddhist travellers. All commented on the great number of monks there and mentioned that Khotanese men loved to sing and dance. We know that theatrical performances of religious nature were popular. They borrowed the word for theatre play from Indian nāṭaka: early Khotanese nālai, tenth-century Khotanese naule, quoted in the Tibetan annals of Khotan in the form no-le.6

The Chinese monk Faxian 法題 set out from Chang'an for India in 399 to obtain originals for the Buddhist vinaya, which were in 'imperfect condition'. He reported that the Khotanese were all Buddhists, and he himself stayed at the most important of the fourteen monasteries in Khotan, the monastery of Gomatī (Gomatīra?), which, he wrote, housed 3,000 Mahāyāna monks.⁷

Songyun 宋雲 and his companion Huisheng 惠生 travelled around 518 for the same purpose (Songyun is reported to have brought back 170 volumes of standard Mahāyāna works). Songyun's account contains much interesting information, for instance that the king of Khotan wore a headdress resembling a cock's crest, from which there descended a silk band 2 feet long and 5 inches broad, that the women of Khotan rode horses like men, and that the dead were burned and their bones collected and buried under small stupas, except the body of the king, which was buried in a coffin in the desert.8

The famous seventh-century monk Xuanzang 玄奘 returned from India on the Southern Silk Road in the early 640s. Approaching Khotan, he found that his fame had preceded him and when he arrived the king himself came to meet him at the border of his country. He was escorted to the capital by the prince and state officers and lodged in the convent of the Sarvāstivādins. Xuanzang reported that there were about a hundred monasteries in the kingdom with about 5,000 followers, all of whom studied Mahāyāna.9

The Khotanese documents reflect the various fortunes of the Southern Silk Road. A passage in *The Book of Zambasta*¹⁰ (cat. 64) contains a list of foreign enemies who attacked Khotan, among them the Red Khocas, i.e., the Tibetans or gDong-dmar 'Red-faces', the Hunas, Cimggas (i.e. the Chinese), and the Supīyas, a local peoples also mentioned in Indian and Chinese sources. ¹¹ From other sources we know that Khotan was under the White Huns, or Hephthalites, around the middle of the sixth century (502–66); it was placed under the Chinese protectorate of Anxi in 648–49 and the Tibetans invaded the area twice: during the late seventh and late eighth centuries. ¹²

From the eighth century onward, in addition to religious texts in Sanskrit and Khotanese we have hundreds of secular documents from Khotan itself, comprising both private and official letters (a few date from earlier centuries). These documents give us a vivid, if incomplete, picture of daily life in Khotan under the Chinese and Tibetans. The foreign presence itself is reflected in the Chinese titles and nouns of measurements¹³ and frequent references to the masters, that is, the Tibetans.

These documents are now housed in various collections, with the majority in the British Library, followed by the Nikolai F. Petrovsky, Sergei F. Oldenburg, and Sergei E. Malov collections in

St. Petersburg¹⁴ and the Sven Hedin collection in Stockholm.¹⁵ A few items are found in various other collections.¹⁶

We know the names and probable dates of several of the kings of Khotan who ruled during this period, both from the Khotanese documents and the Chinese records. The identification of some of them and their dates are still being discussed, but at present the following attributions seem likely:¹⁷

Viśya Vikrraṃ 692-706+ Viśya Sīhya (Yuchi Gui 射理珪) 737?-746/? Viśa' Dharma (Yuchi Sheng 射理勝) +746-756+ Viśa' Vāhaṃ (yauvarāya = vice regent?) (Yuchi Yao 射理曜) *756/7-757+¹⁸ Viśa' Vāhaṃ (Yuchi Yao 射理曜) 767-788+ Viśa' Kīrrta 791?-806+:

All the documents mentioning these kings, except the last, are from the area of the Six Towns, ¹⁹ an area east of the city of Khotan. The two documents mentioning Viśa' Kirrta, however, are from the Hill, modern Mazar-tagh, north of the city of Khotan.²⁰

Most of these documents are clearly from several large 'archives' and contain the correspondence and records of a few officials from the Six Towns and the Hill. Because they usually kept copies of letters they wrote – often on the back of the letter they were answering – we can sometimes follow long sequences of correspondence, but more work is needed to classify the documents and establish a chronology.

From these documents there emerges the picture of a wellorganized society, tightly governed by Chinese and Tibetan officials, in which all kinds of records were diligently kept. We see the transition from Chinese to Tibetan rule in two documents from Mazar-tagh dated to the rule of Viśa' Kīrrta. One is dated in the king's fourth year, the second in his sixteenth year:

M.Tagh.c.0018 = IOL Khot $54(2)^{21}$

Year four – of the month of Rāhaja 18 days – of the Khotanese king Viśa' Kīrrta, in the year of the tsīṣī āmāca, the ṣau-official Viśa'raka.

Here, tsīṣī āmāca is the Chinese title cishi amozhi 刺史阿摩湖, also found in the Chinese document Or.6405 (M.9a) dated 768 discussed by Zhang Guangda and Rong Xinjiang and which they render as 'Prefect'.²² The ṣau Viśa'raka is also in M.Tagh.0466 = Or.12452(C)10.

The latter (metrical) document was written at a time when the Tibetan masters were 'guarding' Khotan:

M.Tagh.b.ii.0065 = IOL Khot 50(4) (cat. 119)

When that good time came – at the time when that great Gracious Lord of the blessed aeon (= the Buddha) took birth here, Viśa' Kirrta, by the power of (his) merits.



(There is) abundance here in everything because of the merits of the king, as well as because of the Tibetan Masters, who are guarding this land of Khotan.

His sixteenth regnal year has passed. Great respect has arisen for him. Because of the honour of the guardians for the sake of promoting the Law,

he with faith (and) in love has invited thither, to Gara (the Hill = Mazar-tagh), two reverend ones. He at this time, at the beginning of the month of Rāhaja

for the sake of the protection of the land (...). (So) strive there in the temple for one year well (and) *uninterrupted, ²³ so that all sufferings disappear!

Importantly, this document shows clearly that the term 'masters', which is found regularly in the documents from this period, refers to the Tibetans.

Obviously, the interaction between the rulers and the ruled was not always trouble free. The Masters were often feared and were themselves easily irritated and angered, when work was not done quickly enough or the commodities – such as wine or oil – they had ordered were not delivered fast enough. The following texts from the Chinese and second Tibetan occupations serve as illustrations.

During one of the years of the şau Aśauka, presumably under king Viśa' Vāhaṃ, the Chinese da(i)shi is upset about late deliveries:

Har.074.1 = Or.12637/16(1)a (Fig. 1)

I, the sau Aśauka in Gaysāta ... greet the hamdasta (mayor?) and all the concerted villagers ... has now become better for me and not ... I have received ... but the dashi and the Gracious one (= the viceroy at Shazhou?) have not *considered ... They did not put the oil into it because ... there is money²⁴ out-

Fig. 1 Khotanese manuscript.

Many of the documents from Khotan make mention of the Chinese and Tibetans who ruled the kingdom from the eighth century onwards and show that the relationship between rulers and ruled was not always harmonious. The above probably dates from the reign of King Viśa' Vaham.

The British Library, Or.12637/16(1)a

standing. Bring them here to me quickly! The *dashi* was very angry and ... Whatever ... men you have there (with you), you here quickly.

... there is thus an ox and a horse. (I) need them here quickly. And when the Gracious Lord ... Birgamdara ... [If not?] ²⁵ he incurs guilt and *responsibility for wheat for the court (?).

And so are the Tibetans:

Or.11252/3

Councillor (= Tibetan blon) Mang-bzhre orders thus: [To the $sp\bar{a}ta$ -official?] 26 *Suhena and to the $sp\bar{a}ta$ Vīsa, (and) to all the merchants together.

[Now] ... Here in Phema I have no tasty wine. Now, send me one (bottle/cask? of?) wine! ...

Or.11252/12

The *spāta* Sudārrjum orders thus. [To the *pharṣa*-official Sāṃdara and] to the workers and to the (rest of) the people: Now, the *dashi* Councillor Mang-[bzhre orders thus?]: *Without delay, place the *house-workers, etc., of the Gracious Lord on *canteen duty! When you hear the order, immediately agree on those *canteen duties for me [so that?] ... the [*canteen duties] may ... *The Tibetan Masters, they became very angry* over those *canteen duties. ... The *canteen duties were *cancelled. On the 21st day of (the month) of Mūcaca [the order went out] to you.

Official letters are of two main kinds, 'orders' from superiors to inferiors and 'petitions' from inferiors to superiors. Both types of documents are characterized by set formulas: 'The official X orders thus. To the official Y in the town of Z. ... On the X-th day of the month of Y the order went out to you.'

In the body of the text a particular situation is often described, in which the recipient is asked to take action, often in the form of: 'When you hear this order, then do such and such!'

Petitions have the following introductory formula: 'I make a petition to X, the official Y in the town of Z.'

Private letters are often between family members, e.g., wife and husband, or between members of monasteries. They contain a relatively standardized greeting formula: (between equals) 'I, X, ask about Y. If things are well with you (and) healthy, I consider it an honour for me. As for me here, then, things are well (and) healthy'; (to superiors, e.g.): 'Bowing down to the earth before the assembled Samgha in Samghapālāna I make a petition.'

Economic documents constitute the major group of documents from this period and include records of payments, dues, tax records, vouchers for deliveries, duty records, population registers and age registers (name lists).

The population and age registers were needed to show who was available for various kinds of duties, such as the 'inspection' duty, and the age registers to show in which category the men belonged. For these purposes, workers were strictly valued for their work capacity and were divided into 'whole' men and 'half' men. The latter were expected to produce or pay only half the amount of the former:

Or.6396/2 (Fig. 2)

19th regnal year, on the 29th day of the month of Bramkhaysja.

The $sp\bar{a}ta$ Sīḍaka and the villagers all together have assigned the court tax. Whole paying men were 41, and half-work (men were) 12 children and old men. They (were) [names].

A whole man on state-work accordingly had (the following) *scheduled (work): one man had to deliver 213 mūrās; and a 'half' man 106 mūrās.

Müpadatta: 18 [whole?] men and a 7 half (men, which amounts to) 1500 ($m\bar{u}r\bar{a}s$).

Sābaka; 23 whole men and 5 half-work men, (which) amounts to 2000 $m\bar{u}r\bar{a}s$. 433 $m\bar{u}r\bar{a}s$.²⁷

Hedin 49b28

One man is to pay 15 $m\bar{u}r\bar{a}s$. You have 3 1/2 men. Your $m\bar{u}r\bar{a}s$ (are) 52. Pay!

Workers committed themselves to delivering certain goods:

Or.6394/1

The *ṣau*-official Phvaim-hvuhi orders thus: To the *ṣpāta* Sīḍaka in Gaysāta and to those men who promised wool cloths and did not deliver the cloths.

Or.6400/1.4

... had promised one [cloth]. Now he can[not] *deliver [the cloth?] to you. In the fall he will deliver ...

[Marşa'ka and Mahvittara] have received 500 mūrās [for hemp?]. They will deliver the hemp in the fall.

SI P 103.18²⁹

Alttum has committed himself to 4000 mūrās. – Alttum's finger seal.



Fig. 2 Khotanese economic document.

The largest group of Khotanese documents from eighth-century Khotan are economic, including records of payments, text documents, duty records and population registers such as the one shown here which enumerates whole and half paying men.

The British Library, Or.6396/2

Fig. 3 Khotanese manuscript on wood. Khotanese documents are written variously on paper and wood, the one shown here being a typical wooden manuscript relating to payment of taxes by various women - all listed under their husbands' names.



If they did not live up to their promises, they were in debt and the undelivered goods were registered as 'missing,' that is, 'still owed':

Or.6397/2

This debt note (is) for the reason that for Hvā Cai Sai there were the following mūrās outstanding. The following had requested mūrās: He had promised Hatkam 125; he had promised the spāta Sīdaka 125; etc. ...

[If ...] cannot deliver the cloths, then he [shall pay] interest ... 100 mūrās.

SI P 103.10

Then send those workmen to me right away. If (even) one man of those men who had promised (to deliver) the stuff is missing for you, you will have to suffer many penalties!

SI P 137.1b

If (even) one man is missing for you, you will get (beaten with) a lot of stick!

What somebody owed, was also calculated by the number of people he had working for him. The formula is 'you have X men - you owe Y (money, goods)':

IOL Khot W 29

Accordingly, the total amount of it was 29 mūrās. You have 9 men. It will be 262 mūrās.

IOL Khot W 33

For this reason, accordingly, one grain-delivering man is to deliver baja (=?) (in the amount of) 3 samgas 7 simgas. You have 9 men. Bring wheat 3 kūsas 3 samgas 3 simgas!

Hedin 46

... they are requesting cloths: five men (are to deliver) 2. You have five men, your cloths are two. Deliver today. The cloths must be 10-chã ones.

Hedin 55

Accordingly, one grain-delivering man is to pay 12 mūrās. You (have) 6 men, *including Bramgala. Your mūrās thus (are) 72.

Both men and (married) women paid taxes; the women were listed by their husbands' names in the tax registers. Taxes were paid in money, goods, or work:

Or.6395/2

In the 17th regnal year, in the year of the sau Sacū, the 17th day of the month of Rāhaja. The villagers of Gaysāta have agreed on their tax for the month of Cvātaja.

There were 55 paying men. The tax was 5500 mūrās: for one man 1000 mūrās. Only, in this count (were) 8 old men; here *dwelling ... (men) *in full strength (were) 37; ... men of the village (were) 10. All in all there were 55 men.

Or.6395/1

Year 22, 23 days of the month of Skarihvāra. This writ concerning *tax-collectors (is) for the following reason: Vimkausa is sending his brother german as tax (payment of) 5,000 mūrās because Vimkausa had promised *Sīña of Pa' [X] thousand mūrās....

Or.8211/1477 (Fig. 3)

(The following women) paid so much tax: Samga's wife paid 100 mūrās. Sala's wife paid 204 mūrās. *Rāna's wife paid 212 mūrās. Jsajsaka's wife paid 100 mūrās. Sampīka's wife paid 55 mūrās....

The principal commodities were cloth, especially cotton, but also silk, and grain, especially barley, with which goods and taxes were paid for according to strict value criteria.30

Hedin 1

In the 35th regnal year working men (are) 44. One man (is to deliver) 23 chās of woollen cloth. Thus, accordingly, the cloths of the men will be 25 and 12 chās. The cloths of the tsīṣi and the merchants will be seven and thirty chās. Altogether, in total, 33

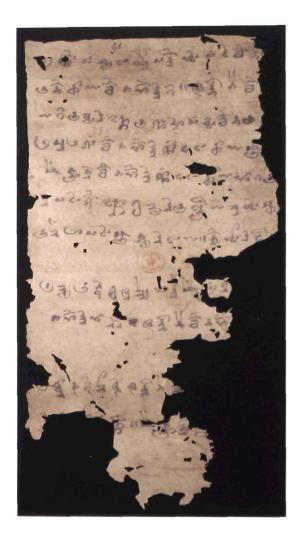


Fig. 4 Khotanese manuscript.

Both coins and various commodities were used for taxes and other payments in eighth-century Khotan. This document mentions cloth, a cow, a sheep and goats all with clear value criteria.

The British Library, Or.6400/2.2

cloths and 2 *chās* are to be delivered. Now according to the vouchers 23 and eleven *chās* have been delivered.

The *tsīṣi spāta* Sudārrjum is to deliver 3 cloths. The *spāta* Yaniviḍta 16 *chās*. The *pharṣa* Sāmada has promised 20 *chās*. Ṣanīraka 20 *chās*. Budarma 23 *chās*. Hvīviṭa and Visarrjum six *chās* and two and a half cloths.

The *Sogdians took the great cloths. The *spāta* Śe'maka took the *collections of the ones in the house of Thini Ttiki. There are as yet no vouchers from the *Sogdians. ...

Hedin 51

They are requesting cotton for the Inner Fort and hemp cloth. One and a half man (is to deliver) 1 bale(?) of cotton and of hemp cloth... You have 2 men. Deliver [X] (bales of?) cotton!

Or.12637/21.2a-c

Suradatta son of Khadara from Āskūra paid the people of Birgamdara 893 mūrās for wheat in the māśa field. The āsala (= ?) has received them. Virsa from Birgamdara delivered wheat: 31 kūsas. The āsala has received them. Şuśdam from Khāhya delivered wheat: 10 kūsas 4 khas. Şuśdam *cancelled wheat: 2 kūsas 7 khas. Virsa *cancelled 6 kūsas.

Or.11344/8b

Kucalai owes 2 kūsas 5 samgas of barley. Instead of that he delivered millet.

And this (is) millet in Phema. ... 15 kūsas 8 ṣaṃgas of wheat – that is to be delivered in Cira.

Or.11252/8

Councilor Zhama Rjai (Tibetan Zham-rje?) orders thus: To the *pharsa* Sāmdara.

Come here with the workers! You owe grain! Whatever grain you have obtained, bring it here today! ... And I need oil. The $sp\bar{a}ta$ Yaniviţi passed through (here). He ordered you about oil: Bring me (some)! ... And then I request cotton from you.

Other commodities included livestock, sacks, ropes, and wine:

Or.6400/2.2 (Fig. 4)

In the first year of the sau Sacū.

Panda had cloths. And he delivered 2 cloths of nine *chās*. Khattīnai had 2 cloths and 200 *mūrās* and a cow: five cloths. Puñargaṃ delivered 6 cloths of 11 *chās*.

Phemduka delivered 11 cloths of 11 chās and ... one sheep, 250 mūrās and four she-goats and there were four ... sheep ...

IOL Khot W 58

The following were the tax collectors who delivered sacks and aysdām (some kind of grain) to Phema:

For ten men 1 sack, [1] rope.

In ...'s year Vimkausa delivered 3 sacks, 3 ropes, and 4 khas of aysdāṃ. Ausyaka 2 khas of aysdāṃ. Budadatta Iresa 1 sack, 1 rope, 2 khas of aysdāṃ. Saṃgasūrai 1 sack, 1 rope, and 2 khas of aysdāṃ. Saṃgaka 1 sack, 1 rope ... etc.

Many documents record people called up for various duties, principally state work or corvée, inspection or surveillance(?), and canteen duty(?). The texts are unfortunately not explicit about the nature of these duties, so the exact meanings of the terms are uncertain.³¹

The term 'inspection, surveillance', probably refers to scouts or border patrols. Note also the frequent mention of service at the Inner Fort, presumably a border guard station. The military duties were apparently assigned as 'shifts'.

Or.11344/8a

The following nine men have gone on inspection:

Namdaka, Şanīraka, Virgām, (the 2nd) Şanīraka, Suhena, Kharajsajsa, Suhadāysa, Īrvadatta, Suradatta.

Two men are carriers of letters: Vasade, Altum.

Û Mulaka, the inspector in Birgamdara, is in Tibet.

Ysividta has gone to the Inner Fort for the disposal of cloths.

In Cira (there are) 3 grain-carriers: Suhadatta, Puysdaka, Ysādadatta.

Five men, messengers, are staying in (their) houses.

Two men have gone to Cira: Aniruda and Svarrjum.

Three men belonging to the şau Vişṇadatta are (still) owed: Surade, Sudatta, Samganamda.

Five men belonging to his Lordship the Young King are (still) owed: Asnadatta, Kharrjum, Tcamisai, Hvurihvāda, Samgaka.

Five men (are) *defectors(?): Suramarșa', Vidarrjum, Haskadarma, Puñadatta, Sumatt-.

24 men belonging to the Gracious Lord are sesame-sowers and wheat-sowers.

Or.11252/9

[The following] *shifts of ... (were) set: Şanīra from Kaṃdva: 5 days, Si Vidatta: 5 days, ... five days, Svarnade: five days, Suhadāysa: five days.

|The following| one-day *shifts were set: Mamñe: 2 *shifts, Si Vidyadatta: one *shift, Suhadatta: [one] shift, ... *Kaca: 2. And the following *shifts of the second *company(??) were set: Altum: one, Suhena: one, Samgapuña: one, Gauda: one.

The two lists of 'inspectors, surveyors' in Or.11252/35a and Hedin 6 represent 'before' (those who were to go) and 'after' (those who went). People might be prevented from going (for various reasons), and someone else might go instead.

Or.11252/35	Hedin 6	
[The following (are)] the men who have to go on *inspection on the third day of the month of Mūnamja:	And the following went on *inspection on the third day of the month of Mūñaṃja:	
Instead of Śarkāṃ Vaśi'raka *goes	Vaśi'raka	
[]	Budadatta	
*Sudatta []	Sudatta from Āskūra	
Budāṣṭira	[]	
Kaledra	Kalidrra	
Svarrnade māśa-worker	Vidyadatta went instead of Svarrnade	
[]	Maṃgala	
Sürade māśa-worker	Kāśaka went instead of Sürade	
Saṃgapuña	[]	
Vidarrjum []		
*Suhadāysa <i>māśa</i> -worker	Suhadāysa māśa-worker	
Nahvana	Nahvana	
Instead of Vidarrjum Svarrnade goes	Svarrnade	
Maṃgala went instead of Vasada	[]	

There are some records of rations, which may be connected with these documents:

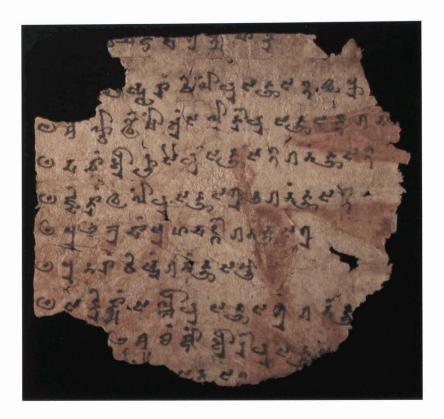
M.Tagh.094 = Or.8212/1590 (Fig. 5)
For Vilām, son of Uspūra(?): barley 2 kūsas 4 khas.
For Amsalaka, son of Khauṣa, among the Śolas: 2 kūsas of barley, wheat ...
For Ārūsai, son of Daca: barley 2 kūsas, wheat 2 kūsas.
For Khalam, son of Jsāka: barley 7 kūsas, wheat 2 kūsas.
For Suhadatta, son of Puñabuda: wheat 7 kūsas.

Records of legal issues and decisions are also found. These documents are frequently on wood, a less perishable material than paper. The records include issues of water rights (cat. 82), sale or lease of persons (male and female) (cats. 83-4), and adoption.³²

etc.

After the Tibetan supremacy in the Tarim Basin had been broken in the mid-ninth century, there was no diplomatic contact between Khotan and Dunhuang until 938, when, according to the

Fig. 5 Khotanese manuscript.
Certain of the Khotanese documents,
such as this manuscript found at the
Tibetan fort of Mazar-tagh, give lists of
rations for various named individuals,
most probably on some sort of
official duty.
The British Library, Or. 8212/1590



Chinese histories, an embassy arrived from King Viśa' Saṃbhava (r.912–c.966) in Khotan with presents. In return the Chinese viceroy sent envoys to his court who arrived in his twenty-ninth regnal year (c.941).³³ King Viśa' Saṃbhava, whom the Chinese called Li Shengtian 李聖天, was then officially recognized as the legitimate ruler of the 'jewel country of Khotan'. Viśa' Saṃbhava/Li Shengtian married a princess of the Chinese governing family at Dunhuang, the Cao, and both are identified by inscriptions on wall paintings in the caves at Mogao/Dunhuang.³⁴

Their son, Viśa' Śūra (r.967–78?), led a victorious army against the Muslim Ilek-khan of Kashgar and reported on the campaign in a letter to the ruler of Dunhuang, dated 17 February 970, in which he mentioned the capture of a dancing elephant. As it happens, both the original letter from the king (P.5538a in the Pelliot collection, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris) and a record of the event in the Chinese annals have been preserved, in which we are told of a dancing elephant captured during a victorious struggle

with Kashgar and presented to the Chinese court in 971.³⁵ In the same letter, however, Viśa' Śūra mentions his 'Tajik' son at Kashgar. Although we cannot be sure, it is possible that the king had taken a royal concubine from Kashgar and had a son with her, who may eventually have proved the undoing of Khotan and Buddhism in Xinjiang, for shortly after King Viśa' Śūra was succeeded by Viśa' Dharma in 978, relations with the Dunhuang government seem to have been broken off, presumably because of Uighur pressure from Ganzhou, graphically reflected in a series of Khotanese letters, probably dating from 990–93.³⁶ We may perhaps conjecture that the king's Muslim relative at Kashgar not long after this replaced Viśa' Dharma as king of Khotan.

Prods Oktor Skjærvø is Aga Khan Professor of Iranian at Harvard University. His catalogue – Khotanese Manuscripts from Chinese Turkestan in the British Library – was published in 2002.

NOTES

- 1 See Mayer, "Die Gründungslegende Khotans"; Skjærvø, "Eastern Iranian Epic Traditions 1", and the references in Emmerick, Guide, 1: n. 3.
- 2 See, for instance, Stein, Ancient Khotan, 204-05, and the references in Emmerick. Guide. 2: n. 4.
- 3 On the names, see Stein, Ancient Khotan, 154-56.
- 4 Stein, Serindia, pl. 38; transcription in Boyer et. al, Inscriptions, no. 661; translation in Burrow, Translation, no. 661. See also Emmerick, Guide, 2 and n. 7 with further references.
- 5 Edwin Pulleyblank, personal communication 9/10/89.
- 6 See Emmerick, Tibetan Texts, 136.
- 7 See Beal, Buddhist Records I: xxv-xxvii; Stein, Ancient Khotan, 169.
- 8 Beal, Buddhist Records I: lxxxvii; Stein, Ancient Khotan, 170-71.
- 9 Beal, Buddhist Records II: 309-25; Stein, Ancient Khotan, 173-75.
- 10 Emmerick, Book of Zambasta chap. 15 verse 9.
- 11 Connection with Tibetan Sumpa (of cat. 187 [Ed.]) is more uncertain. See Stein, Les tribus auciennes, 41–5.
- 12 See the historical overview in Stein, Ancient Khotan, 166-84.
- 13 E.g., chā 'a foot' from Chinese chi R kūsa and kha, measures used for grain (a kha was probably 1/10 of a kūsa); sanga = 4 šinga from Chinese sheng H.
- 14 Published by Emmerick and Vorob'yeva-Desyatovskaya, Saka Documents VII.
- 15 Published by Bailey in Khotanese Texts IV.
- 16 See Emmerick, Guide, 4-5, and Skjærvø, Khotanese Manuscripts, xxxiv.
- 17 This updates Skjærvø, Khotanese, lxvi-lxix.
- 18 According to the Chinese sources, Yuchi Sheng (Viśa' Vāham) left Khotan to help put down An Lushan's rebellion, leaving Yuchi Yao as vice commissioner, but then did not return. See Zhang and Rong, "Sur un manuscrit chinois", 90; "Ba shiji", 346–47, on the connection between An Lushan's rebellion and the accession year of Yuchi Yao.

- 19 Among them, probably: Āskūra, Birgamdara, Cira, Gaysāta, and Phema.
- 20 See the maps in Skjærvø, Khotanese, pl. 1-2.
- Where available, the site mark Stein assigned to each manuscript is given (M.Tagh.c.0018) along with the British Library or institutional pressmark (IOL Khot 54(2)). The latter is also the reference used in Skjærvø, Khotanese. (IOL is short for India Office Library and Or. for the Oriental Department of the British Museum, reflecting the history of the manuscripts after they arrived in London). This manuscript is published in Hoernle, "Report", Part II, Plate III.
- 22 Zhang and Rong, "Sur un manuscrit chinois", 88-89.
- 23 An asterisk (*) is used to indicate uncertain translations.
- 24 The local currency was mūrā, the value of which is not known.
- 25 Square brackets mean that the text is lost (broken off, rubbed off) in the manuscript. Regular brackets contain explanations.
- 26 Khotanese spāta literally means 'general'; pharsa may be 'judge'.
- 27 The writing and reading of many of the numbers are uncertain and do not add up properly.
- 28 The Hedin documents are found in Bailey, Khotanese Texts IV.
- 29 The documents labelled 'SI P' are found in Emmerick and Vorob'yeva-Desyatovskaya, Saka Documents, vol. VII and Saka Documents Text vol. III.
- 30 See Wang Money on the Silk Road, for a discussion of currency in Khotan.
- 31 See Takeuchi's paper in this catalogue for Khotanese employed as hill station cooks under the Tibetan military.
- 32 Most of the known legal documents are discussed in Skjærvø, "Legal Documents".
- 33 See Pulleyblank, "The Staël-Holstein Roll", 90-91.
- 34 See Zhang and Rong. "Les noms du royaume de Khotan", 41-42.
- 35 Pulleyblank, "The Staël-Holstein Roll", 91-92.
- 36 See p. 312.

JADE AND THE
SILK ROAD:
TRADE AND TRIBUTE
IN THE
FIRST MILLENNIUM
CAROL MICHAELSON

'Jade is the produce that has made Khotan famous all over the east since ancient times. In China it has ever been valued more than anywhere else, and most of the information which the Annals of the Celestial Empire give about old Khotan, we owe mainly to the interest attaching to its Jade.'

If anything exemplifies the story of China's relation with the Silk Road it is jade. It is not without reason that jade is associated with China throughout the world: it has been prized and worked there from Neolithic times to the present, equivalent in esteem to gold in the west. And yet the main source of jade for the Chinese imperial court was over a thousand miles outside the empire, in a foreign region over which China could only exercise sporadic control. China acquired its jade through a system of trade and tribute the latter often an euphemistic term for trade - and ensuring a constant supply for the imperial workshops must have been one of the primary reasons for China's massive investment in keeping the Western Regions stable from the Han dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) onwards. But China's workshops were also influenced at certain periods by the tastes of its northern neighbours and some surviving jades from these periods show animals and designs from these rather than solely Chinese traditions, a characteristic not found only in jade: the Silk Road influenced all aspects of Chinese society, politics and faith throughout the first millennium.

Jade is a loosely employed generic term for two essentially monomineralic rock types: nephrite and jadeite. The two are dissimilar in a number of ways: nephrite belongs to the tremolite-ferroactinolite series of the amphibole group of minerals and is a silicate of calcium and magnesium with varying amounts of iron; its structure is made up of closely matted fibres; jadeite, which the Chinese imported from Burma (often referred to as *feicui* 翡翠 in Chinese) belongs to the pyroxene group and is basically a silicate of soda and aluminium, the structure of which is comprised of small, interlocked granular crystals. Historically, however, the Chinese have used the word yu 玉 to refer to many kinds of gemstones, including nephrite and jadeite. There are a few instances of jadeite being worked by the Chinese before the eighteenth century but generally before that time nephrite was almost exclusively used.

Jade has always occupied a special role in Chinese culture. Its beauty and permanence attracted the inhabitants of ancient China and it started to be carved into ornaments and ceremonial implements around 6000 BC. Nephrite is hard and exceptionally tough, ranking 6-6.5 out of 10 on Moh's scale of hardness for minerals, and working it is thus a costly and skilful craft using time-consuming abrasive processes: jade was therefore reserved for the highest elite and signified their owners' position, wealth and power. Jade's durability and rarity also imbued it with spiritual significance and it was used for religious rites, in burials and, later, even included as medi-

Tao Hongjing 陶弘景, a fifth-century medical writer quoted in the Chinese Ming dynasty (1364-1644) pharmacopoeia Bencao gangmu⁵ mentioned sources of jade in regions now comprising Shaanxi and Henan provinces and the Shanhaijing, a work of geography and myth dating in part to the Warring States period (c.475-221 BC), lists two thousand references to jade sources. These sources have not been affirmed and are probably due to the generic meaning of the Chinese word 'yu'.6 However, a number of nephrite sources are now known which are much closer to where the very early Neolithic jades have been found in China, for example at Kuandian in Liaoning province and in Liyang county, Jiangsu province. These are dolomitic nephrites and are likely sources of some of the Neolithic Chinese jades. However they seem to have been mined out by the end of the Neolithic period. But from the

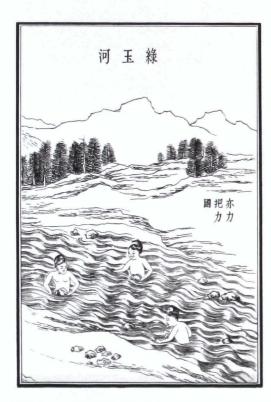


Fig. 1 Illustration from the Chinese encyclopedia Tiangong kaiwu showing the harvesting of jade from the rivers at Khotan.

The British Library, 15258.cc.13, vol. 3.

post-Neolithic period the principal Chinese source of nephrite, and perhaps the only one, was Khotan.8

Khotan is an oasis town in Xinjiang, now the westernmost region of China, bounded in the south by the Kunlun Mountains and to the north by the Taklamakan desert. In the first millennium it was a thriving and independent Central Asian kingdom, the capital, Yotkan (Yutian 于闐)9, situated about five miles west of the present-day town of Khotan (see pp. 134-5). 10

Yotkan is situated between the Kara-kash (Black Jade) and Yurung-kash (White Jade) rivers. These flow down from neighbouring sources in the Kunlun Mountains and unite about eighty miles north of the town and then traverse the Taklamakan desert the only river to do so – eventually reaching the Tarim River. 11 Each year during the spring and summer floods the melting glaciers and snow in the mountains release torrents of water which bring with them sand and mud from the mountains - giving the area its fertility - mixed in with jade boulders. These latter can be collected from the waters once the floods subside and from the beds of rubble deposited along the banks (Fig. 1).

The Tiangong kaiwu, published by Song Yingxing in 1637, describes the gathering of river jade: 'When the river is full in the summer months, the jade follows the current down for one, two, or three hundred li, when it can be taken from the river. Jade reflects moonlight. So when the native jade hunters of the river regions search the river on moonlit nights in autumn, as they mostly do, they scrutinize those places where the jade collects for an intensified glow of the quality of moonlight'12 (Fig. 2). Earlier Chinese histories stated that the Khotanese king had the right to draw the first jade from the river and only after this were the people allowed in. 13

The colouring of nephrite jade - which varies from translucent white to dark green and brown - is typically due to its iron content but, following its geological formation, it may be altered by natural weathering, for instance, during its journey along the river beds, ¹⁴ during burial or from handling (cat. 49). River jade sometimes acquires a brown or reddish colouration, the alteration or patination usually being restricted to the surface, like a crust or skin. This is often due to iron compounds infiltrating the nephritefelt structure or the oxidation of the iron already present. 15

Nephrite was also recovered from the Kunlun Mountains south of Khotan by mining, using the same methods as in ancient Rome. 16 Boulders were heated by fire and then quenched with cold water, and wooden wedges driven in the cracks thus formed to break them into slabs. The colossal slab of dark green nephrite, used in 1404 to close the Samarkand tomb of the Sultan of the World, the Mongol conqueror, Timur, was undoubtedly Kunlun Mountain jade obtained in this manner (Fig. 3).17

There is a reference to jade mining in Du Wan's lapidary encyclopaedia, the Yun Lin Shi Pu¹⁸ written in 1133, but it was probably only in the sixteenth century that intensive mining began to meet an increased demand from the Chinese imperial court. 19 Mined jade was not valued as highly because of the greater risk of its frac-

Fig. 2 Photograph taken by Stein showing a gorge and rope bridge over the Yurung-kash - White Jade River - in the mountains south of Khotan. Jade boulders would be swept down in the river water during the spring and summer thaws and collected near to the town. The British Library, Photo. 329/27(72)

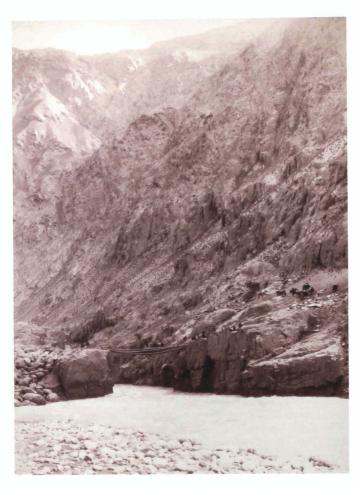


Fig. 3 The sarcophagi of Timur, his court astronomer Ulugh Beg and religious mentor Mir Sayid Barakah in Samarkand. The dark green jade slab over Timur's tomb is, at 1.8 metres, said to be the largest piece of jade in the world and was probably mined from Khotan. In 1740 the Persian invader Nadir Shah tried to steal it, but it was dropped and broken, hence the damage seen here. Photograph courtesy of Antonia Tozer.



turing before the craftsman had finished working it. Hidden natural fractures were exacerbated by the heating and cooling processes. River jade was inevitably tougher as only stress and fracture-free boulders would survive the jarring river journey over hundreds of miles.20

With an assured market in China, it is not surprising that jade became one of the major industries of Khotan and that the Chinese located one of their four major Central Asian garrisons in this kingdom. But the river silt which accompanied the jade boulders was just as important for Khotan's wealth: it provided a large area of fertile soil which, when irrigated, produced crops in abundance, including cereals, fruits and cotton. By the early centuries of the first millennium, Khotan was therefore a thriving kingdom with its own language - written and spoken and part of the Indo-European group - and just as influenced by the Iranian and Indian cultures to its west and south as by the Chinese empire to its east. Its founding legends, recorded in Chinese and Tibetan texts, relate to the Buddhist Guardian King Vaiśravana and the son of the famous Indian Buddhist proselytizer, King Aśoka.

One of the earliest historical references to Khotan links it with jade. The Mu tianzi zhuan 穆天子傳, a Chinese text purportedly about King Mu (r. 956-18 BC), but written some centuries later, tells the story of the Queen Mother of the West and her gift of jade from the Kunlun Mountains:21 A 'white-jade night-shining cup' sent by the people of the Western Regions to King Mu is also mentioned.²² The Shanhaijing writes of the jade mountains being the dwelling palace of the Queen Mother of the West.²³ Another early reference to jade from the Khotan area was recorded in the Huainanzi (written pre-139 BC), who wrote of the jade trees atop the Kunlun Mountains.²⁴ The Shiji, by Sima Qian, written by c.90 BC, ²⁵ and the Hanshu, 26 written in the first century AD, both speak of Khotan



Fig. 4 Plaque with animals in combat dated from fourth to first century BC

This plaque is identical with bronze plaques used as belt ornaments by steppe peoples. They were often framed by a rectangular border with pear-drop lozenges, as on this niece, which were inlaid with precious and semi-precious stones.

The Hotung Collection, on exhibition at The British Museum

as a jade-producer: the former describes the Kunlun Mountains as yielding great quantities of jade stone, which are collected and transported to the emperor.²⁷ And by this time the border post marking the boundary of China was called 'Jade gate' (Yumen 玉門).

The earliest of these references predate the start of imperial China's official links with the Western Regions, usually traced back to when the Han-dynasty emperor, Han Wudi (r.141-87), sent Zhang Qian 張騫 as official envoy to Bactria (present-day Afghanistan) to try to persuade the Yuezhi rulers there to join him in an alliance against the Xiongnu (at that time threatening China's north-west borders). However, the discovery in Bactria of Chinese silk dating from around 1500 BC shows that there were trade links preceding this. The Chinese historical and legendary references to the Western Regions as a land of jade only support earlier links.

After China gained major victories over the Xiongnu (in 60 and 52 BC) they established the Western Regions as a Protectorate, with four garrisons, a series of forts and watchtowers, and a skeleton official presence led by a Protectorate-General. 28 This new stability opened the way for trade to burgeon, although much of it was carried out under what the Chinese histories called the tribute system. Although in the guise of a vassal state giving tribute to the Chinese empire this was in most cases an excuse for foreign traders to bring large amounts of goods into China. At this time the kingdom of Khotan was starting to forge its own identity, seen by the fact that, in the first century AD, it was minting its own Sino-Kharosthī coins. 29 'Tribute' was sent to the Chinese Han emperors by the Khotanese king at regular intervals, 129, 202, 30 220 and 222 AD, 31 As well as jade, these also included products of one of its other major industries, rug-making. The products of its paper-making, however, made fewer inroads into a country which had invented paper and was, by now, producing hemp and mulberry paper of the finest quality.

During the succeeding centuries China fragmented into the Three Kingdoms (221-65) and then the Southern and Northern Dynasties (265-589) and its political influence in the Western Regions declined. However, tribute missions are mentioned in the Chinese histories for the years 457, 466, 467, 468 and an embassy from the king of Persia to China with elephants and rare presents was held up temporarily in Khotan in about 466.32 Khotanese embassies were again mentioned in the histories for the years 502, 507, 509, 512, 513, 518, 541, 574 and 587.33 Among the tribute of 541 was a foreign-carved jade Buddha statue and in 587 the Turks sent a Khotanese jade staff.34 Less jade has been found in Northern Dynasties' tombs compared to those of the Southern Dynasties: however, this could relate as much to the different burial practices of the non-Chinese northern rulers as to a paucity of supply of jade. The frequent embassies suggest that a regular supply of jade entered China throughout the late fifth and sixth centuries.

By this time Khotan had added silk-production to its other lucrative industries. China had managed to keep the secret of silk

for thousands of years but legend tells of how a Chinese princess, sent to the Western Regions for a diplomatic marriage alliance, smuggled silkworm cocoons and mulberry leaves out of China in her headdress. The so-called Silk Princess is depicted on a painted wooden panel from Dandan-Uiliq, in the north of Khotan. The truth is probably more prosaic, but certainly by the fifth century Khotan had a thriving silk producing industry which survived to the twentieth century.

While Khotan was China's major source of jade, it did not become a major jade-working centre. The most skilful work was carried out in Chinese workshops during the Han and Tang periods in the capitals at Chang'an and Luoyang. We have limited information about the organization of jade workshops before the Ming and Qing dynasties when Suzhou and Yangzhou became famous for their jade working. However the Hou Hanshu in the treatise on rites and ceremonies, compiled by Sima Biao (240–306), describes how imperial court workshops changed with manufacturing mortuary accessories, particularly jade: the Artisans of the Eastern Garden, the Dongyuan jiang 埃里特. 35

When China was reunited under the Sui (589–618) and then the Tang (618–907), ³⁶ Chinese power and trade were revitalized and a plentiful supply of raw jade was again available to the Chinese imperial court and ruling classes. From 648 Khotan became one of the four main bases representing Chinese authority in Eastern Central Asia and there are numerous references to Khotan in the Tang histories. ³⁷ The first reference to jade craftsmanship in Khotan is found in the *Jiu Tangshu* which states: 'The kingdom of Yutian has good jade and the local craftsmen good techniques. In the sixth year of Zhenguan (632) they sent an Ambassador to the Tang court to pay tribute with a jade belt.' ³⁸ The belt was designed under Persian influence to show the forms of full and crescent moons in its twenty-four green plaques. ³⁹

Historically the peoples living beyond the borders of China, in the steppes of Central Asia and the desert lands of the Silk Route, coveted China's high-quality goods and raided and invaded whenever they could. In the Tang period and earlier China absorbed and adapted many foreign features in the shapes of vessels and in decoration of all kinds which transformed Chinese applied arts (Fig. 4). By the beginning of the Tang dynasty in the seventh century, the capital Chang'an, at the eastern end of the Silk Route, was a cosmopolitan city with a population including Tocharian, Sogdians, Turks, Uighurs, Mongols, Arabs, Persians and Indians and offering a wide range of foreign goods. A major influx of foreigners arrived in 630 when the Eastern Turks were defeated by the Tang-dynasty army and thousands of Turkish families moved to Chang'an to live. King Peroz of Persia and his son came to Chang'an to seek help from the Chinese court after the defeat of the Sasanian dynasty. The king's Sasanian compatriots, in particular the metal workers, had great influence on much of the decorative repertoire of the Chinese artisans across all media.

At the beginning of the Tang dynasty General Li Jing 李琦

(571-649) conquered Shaoxian, for which the Tang emperor Taizong rewarded him with jade from Khotan in the form of plaques. The Tang emperor Xuanzong (r.712-56) reputedly had over thirty thousand musicians, many of them foreigners, at his court (although the Chinese used figures like this simply to denote very large numbers). One of the most common decorative themes on jade belt sets in the Tang period was that of foreign musicians and entertainers. Some of the longer plaques display dancers and the shorter ones musicians, both of Central Asian origin. The idea of combining a foreign decorative image with a traditional Chinese material seems to have been particularly appealing and can be seen on many individual plaques and belt sets of this period. So it is possible that some of the jade of this cosmopolitan period was made by Chinese artisans using foreign inspiration for the design and some may well have been made by foreign artisans from Central Asia who came to live in Chang'an and other metropolitan areas. 40

Taizong claimed the states of Kucha, Khotan, Kashgar, Karghalik and Congling as a marriage gift when he gave a Chinese princess to a Turkic Kaghan in 646.⁴¹ Embassies from Khotan were also mentioned for the years, 636, 642, 644 and 645.⁴² In 674–75 the king of Khotan is recorded to have personally paid homage at the Chinese court; another ruler in 742–45 received a Chinese princess in marriage.⁴³

There was clearly no shortage of Khotanese jade at this period but neither was there a decrease in demand. Despite the fact that his treasury already held a carved cup and a belt decorated with plaques of the almost legendary five-coloured jade, the Tang emperor Xuanzong still complained that he had never personally received any artefact made from it.44 He duly commanded his generals to reprimand the negligent foreigners responsible for this omission - almost certainly a reference to the Khotanese. A cargo of the precious jade was subsequently dispatched to Chang'an but the caravan was robbed. China was not alone among the neighbouring powers looking to control the Western Regions - by this time Tibetans of the First Tibetan Empire were a threat in the south and Uighurs from the Uighur Empire threatened from the north. Xuanzong sent an army of forty thousand to recover his jade but, although victorious, the Chinese general was lost in a great desert storm on the return journey together with the precious jade. 45

The end of Xuanzong's reign saw China racked by civil war and the Tibetans moved in to become the new colonial masters in Khotan when the Chinese withdrew their forces to fight at home. The Uighurs also gained more power as they were called in by the Chinese to help them evict the rebels from Luoyang, the second Chinese capital. And it was the Uighurs who robbed Zhu Ruyu, a Chinese palace official, on his return from Khotan in 780 on an imperial mission to buy jade for the emperor Dezong. ⁴⁶ The Chinese kept peace with the Uighurs by guaranteeing to buy large numbers of their horses and by sending a succession of princesses in the direct imperial line to marry Uighur kaghans. One of the Uighur embassies sent to collect such a princess brought presents

which included jade belts – along with brocades, furs, and a thousand horses and fifty camels. It was not only the Chinese who collected jade at this time: the traditional Turkic belts worn by the Uighurs and other northern nomads are frequently decorated with jade plaques, and many of the jade objects were carved in China for the Uighur market with motifs traditional to their nomadic culture, especially depictions of animals.

The Tibetans were only driven out of the Western Regions by Chinese loyalists by the mid-ninth century but the Uighurs, having been driven from their empire to the north, had also moved in to challenge Chinese control, especially in the north. The end of the Tang empire in 907 heralded another fifty years of fragmentary rule in China - the Five Dynasties (907-60), but diplomatic and trade contacts continued. During the Later Jin (936-43) the Khotanese sent tribute to China and in the reign of Tianfu (936-41) the emperor sent Zhang Kuangye 張匡鄴 to confer the title of Dabao king on the ruler of Khotan, although he had already been acclaimed king - Visa' Sambhava (r.912-c.66). Subsequently the king of Yutian presented the Chinese court with a thousand catties of jade,⁴⁷ as well as jade seals and exorcizing tokens, in addition to other gifts as tribute for the Later Jin emperor, Shi Jingtang (r.937-42).48 Later the founding emperor of the Chinese Song dynasty, Taizu, (960-76) was offered by the Khotanese a jade gui 主 in a jade case, together with a jade pillow.⁴⁹

In 961, 965 and 966 the Khotanese king sent rich presents, including jade, horses and camels. In 969 Viśa' Saṃbhava's son, Viśa' Śūra (r.967–78?), offered the Chinese a magnificent piece of jade, weighing not less than 237 lbs., providing they sent someone to collect it. This is a reference to the dangers of the area at that time and the frequent missions to China from 938 may be attributed to requests for protection against the Uighurs who exercised control over the Hexi Corridor.⁵⁰

However, even if jade was not coming directly from Khotan, it

was reaching the Chinese court through Uighur intermediaries. James Watt notes that the Uighurs became such indefatigable bearers of tribute – which included jade – that the Song histories record in 951 that the price of the best quality lychee flesh-white jade fell by about seventy to eighty percent of its former value because of oversupply. This is the first historical instance of jade being devalued, but is not the first instance of the tribute system having a real effect on supply and demand. The Chinese thereafter refused all jade tribute and only paid for the horses (although these were also oversupplied).⁵¹

The second millennium saw the same pattern of trade, tribute, and times of scarcity and over-supply. However, during the eighteenth century, the Kangxi (r.1662-1722) and Qianlong emperors (r.1736-95) greatly expanded the borders of the Chinese empire to exercise control across a large territory embracing parts of Central Asia, Tibet and Southeast Asia. This meant a secure supply of nephrite jade from Khotan and jade now also began to be mined in much larger quantities than before. Contact was made with the Mughal jade workers of Central Asia and an exchange of working techniques and designs was promoted by the Qianlong emperor's keen interest in them. However during the Qing dynasty, jadeite began to be valued in a way it had not been before and from the nineteenth century jadeite from Burma became increasingly popular, perhaps due to a change of style and taste in the Chinese upper classes who even now pay incredibly high sums for the bright emerald green jadeite material which is mostly used in jewellery. So nephrite gradually became less in demand and Khotan's prominent part in the jade trade thus declined.⁵² It remains to be seen whether it will rise again.

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NOTES

- 1 Stein, Sand Buried Ruins, 233-34.
- 2 Wang, "Jade in China". However by the time of Song Yingxing, c.1637, (see note 18) the word yu, true jade, was used to refer to only nephrite: See Watt, Chinese Jades, 26.
- 3 Schafer, The Golden Peaches, 227; Needham, Science and Civilisation, 5: 9, 25, 43, 87, 102, 111, 118.
- 4 Wang and Liu, "The Face of the Other World" and Wu, "The Prince of Jade Revisited".
- 5 Li Shizhen, (1518-93), Bencao gangmu, (Compendium of materia medica) published 1602. China's most famous materia medica. See Bencao gangmu baihua jingyi (translated by Yu Chiyang et al), Chongqing: Chongqing daxue chubanshe, 1995; 36-39.
- 6 The Chinese character for yu, is represented by a pictograph of three strips strung together (see above). In view of its cultural importance throughout Chinese history it is interesting that this character, enclosed inside a square, is used as the second character to write the country's name in its abbreviated form used since the introduction of simplified characters in the 1950s.
- Jing and Wen, "Mineralogical Inquiries". For a general mineralogical survey of Chinese jade, see Middleton and Freestone, "The Mineralogy and Occurrence of Jade". For the analysis of the rock from Jiangsu see Wen and Jing, "A Geoarchaeological Study". For short overviews on jades in China from Neolithic times see Childs-Johnson, "Jade as Material and Epoch" and Watt, "Jade".
- 8 Deans and Frey, "Khotan".
- 9 Hulsewé, China in Central Asia, 96: n.147; for the history of the names for Khotan see Zhang and Rong, "Les Noms du royaume de Khotan", 23-46.
- 10 For more on Khotan see Skjærvø's essay in this collection and pp. 134-5.
- One of the earliest geographical descriptions of Khotan's rivers is in the Weishu, 6: 2262-63). The most detailed account of the jade rivers of Khotan is in the records by Gao Juhui who was sent to Khotan during the Later Jin dynasty (936-46). He wrote down his observations in a notebook and these notes have been preserved in the New History of the Five Dynasties in the appendix on Foreigners. See Xin Wudai shi, 3: 917-18.
- 12 Song, Tiangong kaiwu, 300. Song also writes of the fact that naked women

- which was yang!

 Xin Wudai shi, 3: 918.
- 4 Watt, Chinese Indes, 26-27 and Hall, Banks and Stern, "X-ray Fluorescent

were sent to find the jade as they were yin and were thus attracted to the jade

- 15 Private communication from Herbert Giess. Also see Lee, Understanding lade, 13.
- 16 Savage, Chinese Jade, 4.
- 17 Wills, Jade of the East, 141 and Plates 131-2.
- 18 Du Wan, Yun Lin Shi Pu: A Lapidarium, first published AD 1133. For information on this book see: Ancient China's Technology and Science, 260.
- 19 Watt, Chinese Jades, 27.
- 20 Giess, Early Modern European Explorers, 2.
- 21 Xia, Li and Wang, Ancient Mining Industry, 413-30.
- 22 See a discussion of this and the conflation of the myth concerning the Han emperor Wudi's similar journey to the Queen Mother of the West in Schipper, L'Empereur Wou, 43, 44.
- 23 Shanhaijing jianshu (Classic of the Mountains and Seas) with commentary by Guo Pu (276–324). See chapter 2, xishan jing, 72 and the first five chapters. Also see Birrell, The Classic of Mountains and Seas.
- 24 Huainanzi, chapter 4. See Huainan Hunglie jie, 122. For a translation see Major, Heaven and Earth, 150; the Guanzi also often mentions the Yushi 45, ft. people as a western people who purveyed jade, evidently from the sources of supply around Khotan. These people are associated with the Yuezhi tribes. See Rickett, Guanzi, 2: 348, 386, 438; Pulleyblank: "Chinese and Indo-Europeans", 19.
- 25 Sima Qian, Shiji, 10: 3173.
- 26 Hanshu, 9: 2696. For a translation see: Hulsewé, China in Central Asia, 224.
- 27 These various records were brought together in the encyclopaedia: Qinding Gujin tushu jicheng 贫宜古今陽書集成 where they form the 55th chapter of the Bian yi dian 場務碑, the section dealing with foreign nations and countries. This was translated in part by Abel-Rémusat and published in 1820 under the title Histoire de la ville de Khotan (see bibliography). However, as Stein pointed out in Ancient Khotan, 152 this is not comprehensive.

- 28 Liu, Ancient India, 14; Pulleyblank, Central Asia, 251.
- See Wang's paper in this collection for further information.
- 30 Pulleyblank, Central Asia, 256, describing the elephant which accompanied the tribute. See Hou Hanshu, 2: 382.
- 31 Stein, Ancient Khotan, 168; Pulleyblank, Central Asia, 257.
- 32 Stein, Ancient Khotan, 170; Abel-Rémusat, Histoire, 27.
- 33 Abel-Rémusat, Histoire, 27, 28; Stein, Ancient Khotan, 170.
- 34 Abel-Rémusat, Histoire, 17; Stein, Ancient Khotan, 170; Suishu, 6: 1871.
- 35 Michaelson, "Han Dynasty Chinese Glass Plaques", 51-52.
- 36 For a chronology of Khotanese history in Tang and post-Tang times, see: Hamilton, "Sur la chronologie khotanaise", 47-53.
- 37 Twitchett, The Sui and T'ang 3.1: 224-25.
- 38 Quoted by Yang Boda in Keverne, Jade, 176.
- 39 Schafer, The Golden Peaches, 226; Laufer, Jade, 291–92; Abel-Rémusat, Histoire, 67.
- 40 Michaelson, Gilded Dragons, 79-80, 105.
- 41 Chavannes, Documents, 266.
- 42 Wang, Cefu yuangui, 12: 2405. For more references to Yutian (Khotan) and various mission visits see: Utsunomiya and Naito, Cefu, 2,3, 234–7; but see Stein, Ancient Khotan, 175; Abel-Rémusat, Histoire, 67–73.
- 43 Stein, Aucient Khotan, 177; Chavannes, Documents, 127: n.4
- 44 Schafer, The Golden Peaches, 36.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Stein, Ancient Khotan, 177; Abel-Rémusat, Histoire, 72-3
- 47 A catty is half a kilogram.
- 48 Abel-Rémusat, Histoire, 82.
- 49 Song Shi, 40: 14106.
- 50 Stein, Ancient Khotan, 180-2; Abel-Rémusat, Histoire, 86.
- 51 Watt, "Jade Carving", 189.
- 52 In the writing of this essay, I am very grateful for the help of Herbert Giess; and Margaret Sax and Andrew Middleton of the British Museum's department of Scientific Research and Conservation. For a comprehensive history of Chinese jade see Rawson, Chinese Jade.

THE TIBETAN MILITARY SYSTEM AND ITS ACTIVITIES FROM KHOTAN TO LOP-NOR TSUGUHITO TAKEUCHI

The Tibetan Empire (seventh to mid-ninth century) occupied and ruled the Southern Route of the Silk Road and most of the Hexi Corridor, including Khotan, Lop-Nor, and Dunhuang, for over fifty years from the late eighth to the mid-ninth centuries. The newly acquired territories were divided into several administrative units called khrom 'military district government': e.g., Tshal-byi khrom in the Lop-Nor area and Kwa-cu khrom including Dunhuang. Small kingdoms like Khotan (? -c.1006) were allowed to retain their regimes under Tibetan colonial domination. Tibetan armies, including previously subjugated Sumpa and Zhangzhung elements, were sent and stationed there, and local peoples, such as Chinese, Khotanese, 'A-zha (i.e. Tuyuhun), and Mthong-khyab, were recruited in situ and incorporated into the Tibetan military system.

While the outline of the Tibetan administrative system has gradually become understood, details such as, for example, how Tibetan armies were dispatched, how local peoples were recruited, what were their duties, and so on, have remained unknown. A systematic and well-organized administrative system would have been indispensable for Tibetans to rule Central Asia – a territory far away from its homeland – for over half a century.

Among the Old Tibetan texts unearthed in Central Asia, the wooden slips (henceforth woodslips) from the Khotan and Lop-Nor areas are the most informative primary sources for the present subject, because many of them were used by military officials and soldiers. The largest collection of Tibetan woodslips is found in the Stein Collection in the British Library, which houses about two thousand three hundred. In this paper I wish to introduce some of the woodslips relevant to the Tibetan military system in an attempt to depict how the Tibetan military administration of Central Asia actually functioned.

Old Tibetan woodslips - analysis of shape and content

Old Tibetan woodslips were mostly excavated from the ruined forts of Mazar-tagh and Miran. Mazar-tagh is located to the north of Khotan along the Khotan river, while the Miran site is situated to the west of Lake Lop. They were the military bases of the Tibetan administration of the Khotan and Lop-Nor areas, respectively. Naturally, the woodslips mainly concern military affairs, though there also exist a few slips regarding Buddhism, other religious texts (which include prominent use of the word bon), and divination.

Since paper was already prevalent at the time, woodslips were used for specific purposes which are more suitable for wood, e.g., tallies, soldier tablets, tags, military dispatches. One of the important characteristics of woodslips is their physical form or shape. The shape of a woodslip conforms with its function and usage. For example, Fig. 1 shows an example of a letter cover with a seal case, which is always at the left end. The form of address is written from





Fig. 1 Tibetan woodslip letter with seal case.

By the time of the Tibetan occupation of the eastern Silk Road in the late eighth century paper was prevalent, but woodslips were used for specific purposes which were more suitable for wood, such as tallies, soldier tablets, tags, and military dispatches. A common form was a letter with a seal case, such as shown here. The seal case is always at the left end and the address is written from left to right. The content is written on the second and sometimes the third slip, which were joined to the covering case with strings.

The British Library, IOL Tib N 691 and 684 (top), 1629 (middle) and 1521 (bottom)

Fig. 2 Wooden knife.

Woodslips only had a temporary use and, once finished with, they were often refashioned into useful everyday items such as a knife, as shown here, for use by the soldiers garrisoned in the fort.

The British Library, IOL Tib N 1061

left to right. As is shown in Fig. 1, the content is written on the second and sometimes the third slip, which were joined together with strings. Another form of letter was attached by string to goods like an invoice.

Reuse is another important feature of woodslips. The surface of used woodslips was often shaved away so that there was a blank surface for new writing. But old woodslips were also made into wooden tools, such as knives, spoons and spatulas (Fig. 2 and cats. 110-2). Sometimes one edge was rounded and charred, probably to make it soft (cat. 112). According to my colleague, a specialist in Japanese woodslips, these resemble those found in toilet ruins in Japan - so they could be a contemporary 'toilet paper'. Stein stated in his report² that the rooms excavated at Miran and Mazar-tagh were distinguished by a bad smell, to which these scrapers may have contributed.

These wooden tools bear witness to the daily life of Tibetan soldiers and their families alongside the artefacts unearthed from the same ruins, e.g., scale armour, bows and arrows, wooden keys, leather pouches, wooden weaving sticks and spinning whorls, wooden combs, fishing nets, slings, felt and woollen bags, woven rugs, and shoes (see cats. 109, 113-5).3 Here I will focus on one typical type of woodslip, namely tallies used in the Khotan area.

'Hill-stationing' (ri-zug) slips

Cats. 101-4 display a particular type of tally stick. One side is painted red and has had several short and long notches cut into it. Sometimes the word nas 'barley' is inscribed on them. A wedge is cut away at the bottom right and there is a string-hole on the left. Nearly eighty of these items were found at Mazar-tagh and they thus form a group which I call 'the ri-zug slips'.

On the left side are written place names, often ending with rtse 'mountain peak'. They are places for ri-zug or hill-stationing of watchmen. F. W. Thomas translates ri-zug as 'mountain sickness.'4 zug is the perfect stem of the intransitive verb 'dzug-pa' to be pricked and to place or put down'; it came to mean 'torment, illness' in Western dialects, which Jäschke learned at Kyelang and included in his dictionary.5 But, Tibetans would not get mountain sickness in the low Taklamakan desert. Thus, zug should be understood in its original sense, 'place, put down' - thereby 'settle'. Around Mazartagh, there are many hills or taghs to which watchmen were stationed for a certain period: I have identified over forty.

These watchmen were sent as a unit called a tshugs, which is another derivation from the verb 'dzug-pa. One tshugs consisted of four men, the tshugs-pon 'commander', 'og-pon 'sub-commander', byan-po 'cook', and byan-g.yog 'assistant cook'. Cat. 104 shows a woodslip listing these members. The inclusion of cooks may at first seem strange, but is understandable because this is not a combat unit. Also, they must have been in charge of logistics in general, not just cooking. (Interestingly, in sixth-century Japan every soldier was accompanied by a cook during military campaigns and Stein and his Indian surveyor each had their own cook on their expeditions).

How were the woodslips made and used? According to my colleague, Professor Tateno, a specialist in the study of Japanese woodslips, the triangular piece must have been cut out before the bottom right corner was removed. This is supported by the fact that we have found woodslips from which the triangular piece had been cut out, but the bottom right corner has not yet been removed.

Cat. 101 shows a woodslip in the very first stage of production, where a ri-zug location is written, but no notches or wedges have been cut away. Cat. 102 is in the next stage of production, when the notches have been cut. This shows how the notches function: long notches are cut all the way across down to the bottom edge, while

Fig. 3 Wood tally listing provisions.

When Tibetan soldiers were sent to hill stations outside the fort they were given a wedge section cut out from a woodslip, naming their destination. The woodslip with the wedge removed - like the ones shown here - was kept at the provisioning office at the fort and sent out with regular provisions. The wedge was shown as identification and checked against the tally. Sometime, as here, the watchmen wrote a note on the back acknowledging receipt of the provisions. The British Library, IOL Tib N 1180 and 1442



Fig. 4 Petition.

This is a letter from the Tibetan soldiers stationed at a hill named Gling-rings to the soldiers stationed at Ho-tong gyu-mo and other hills westwards to relay their request for provisions to the headquarters, Mazar-tagh. The British Library, IOL Tib N 1577 (both sides)



Fig. 5 Woodslip mentioning a hill station.

The Tibetan woodslips give clues as to the relative position of hill stations. There were over forty locations, many to the east of Mazar-tagh, some to the north, and probably some to the west. This slip mentions a rear-guard station to the south of Mazar-tagh, at the confluence of Kara-kash and Yurung-kash near the ancient capital of Khotan. The British Library, IOL Tib N 1437 (both sides)



the same number of short notches are cut at both the top and bottom edges. The long notches served for later matching-up or identification, while the short ones are likely to have represented a specific number of measures (i.e., amount) of grain.

When watchmen - a group of tshugs-po - set out for a hill-station, they took provisions but would have needed more later, for which they brought the cut-out wedge as a tally. So the tally was made and cut apart before the watchmen's departure. After a certain period, messengers called so-slung (ITN1936) transported provisions to the hill-station together with the woodslip indicating their destination. When the messengers handed over the provisions to the watchmen, the latter had to show the tally (wedge part) for identification, which the messengers brought back together with the slip to the office in Mazar-tagh as a receipt. The slips were then kept in the office as records.

Periods and locations of hill-stations

In a few cases, these woodslips contain writings by the watchmen on the reverse as follows.

ITN1180 (fig. 3)

A. 'jag ma 'gur

B. ri zug brgyags z[i]gs [tshos (/pos)] nos

'Zigs-tsho (/po) received the provisions for hillstationing.'

ITN1111 (cat. 103)

A. \$ /:/ stag skugs /

B. nas bre drug ma nos te pyis nod

'[We] have not received [our] six bre of barley; [we hope we] will receive [them] later.'

Six short notches and one long on verso.

ITN1442 (fig. 3)

A. \$ /:/ 'phrul gI mye long / kun snang rtse / B. glu gang gis phye khal gcIg dang bre bzhI nos / phyin bre [phye dang]

'Glu-gang received one khal and 4 bre of flour; later [he will receive. . . | and a half bre.'

ITN1541 (cat. 102)

A. dgra yl cad /

B. [zla (/za)] pa rl zugl brgyags / ryang rogs nos 'Ryang-rog received the provisions of hill-stationing (for a month?).'

ITN1541 seems to mention the provisions for hill-stationing for one month. But ITN1442 suggests that the amount of barley flour to be received was about one khal 'bushel' and 9 bre - which would not be sufficient for this period. I suspect that one month was rather exceptional, and that watchmen generally received provisions every two or three weeks.

How long, then, did watchmen have to be stationed on the hill? In one woodslip (ITN1629) watchmen complain that they stayed as long as one year and two winter months. However, this is exceptional: they were normally stationed for less than a year, during which time they were supposed to receive provisions regularly.

In spite of such a well-organized logistics system, it is not surprising to find woodslips in which watchmen make urgent requests for extra provisions due to shortage. For example, ITN1577 (Fig. 4) is a letter from the watchmen stationed at a hill named Gling-rings to the watchmen stationing at Ho-tong gyu-mo and other hills westwards to relay their request for provisions to the headquarters, Mazar-tagh.

These slips also give clues as to the relative position of hill stations. As shown below, there were over forty locations. Many of them were located to the east of Mazar-tagh, some to the north, and probably some to the west. To the south of Mazar-tagh, at the confluence of Kara-kash and Yurung-kash there was a rear-guard station (Fig. 5).

The geographical distribution of ri-zug suggests that the watchmen stationed there kept watch for the enemies from the east, north and west, namely, from the direction of the Northern Route of the Silk Road, in order to protect Khotan and other Tibetan territories along the Southern Route of the Silk Road, The potential enemies at the time were the Uighurs.

Organization of the unit tshugs and Tibetan military system - ru and stong-sde

As mentioned above (see p. 51), one tshugs consisted of four men. Usually they were combinations of two or three Tibetans and one or two Khotanese. The tshugs-pon 'commander' and 'og-pon 'subcommander' were always Tibetans (including Zhangzhungs and Sumpas), while the byan-po 'cook' and byan-g.yog 'assistant cook' were often Khotanese, though there is a case where all the members were Tibetans (ITN1457). The table overleaf lists the watchmen of each tshugs. For example, at Ho-tong gyu-mo and Gling-ring smug-po-tshal a tshugs consisting of two Tibetans and two Khotanese was stationed. Sometimes only three members are listed (OTM 247), possibly because one Khotanese member has deserted (see p. 55) or for some other reason (see table on following page). The list also indicates which stong-sde 'thousand-district or chiliarchy' and ru 'horn' each member belongs to. For example, in ITN1554, the two Tibetan members, tshugs-pon and 'og-pon, belong to Myal-pa stong-sde and Skyi-stod stong-sde, respectively. The two stong-sde in turn belong to G.yo-ru 'Left horn' and Dbu-ru 'Middle horn', respectively.

The word ru 'horn' is the term for the largest administrative division of Tibet. There were four horns: the Dbu-ru 'Central horn', G.yas-ru 'Right horn', G.yo-ru, 'Left horn', and Ru-lag 'Supplementary horn'. Two additional horns were also formed: Sumparu in the northeast (Amdo), and Zhangzhung-ru in the west (Mnga'-ris). Each ru comprised in principle eight stong-sde or chiliarchies, which served as the basic unit for supplying soldiers to the government. Thus, soldiers stationed in Central Asia each belonged to a particular one of the stong-sde and ru.

The list clearly indicates that Tibetan soldiers composing each tshugs belong to different stong-sde, and even to different ru. They seem to have been selected intentionally from different units so that they hardly knew each other. But, as ITN2013 shows, if a soldier on duty became sick, he had to be replaced by someone in the same stong-sde. The replacement took place not in Central Tibet but in Mazar-tagh. In the case of Miran, ITN710 + 715 show that the watchmen at Miran also belong to different stong-sde, but, unlike Mazar-tagh, they are all from the Sumpa-ru, which is located in northeastern Tibet near Miran. Thus, soldiers sent to Miran belong to different stong-sde from those sent to Mazar-tagh.6

We may infer from these woodslips that the Tibetan armies were sent to Central Asia stong-sde as a unit, and that they were accompanied by their families and settled there. Soldiers were called up for duty by turns, but while off duty they lived with their families. This supports Richardson's statement that: 'the military occupation of a great province lasting for nearly a century could not have operated without permanent bases and an efficient commissariat. The campaigning season was generally confined to autumn and winter and the Tibetans doubtless followed the Chinese practice of establishing military colonies where soldiers' families could live, and grain could be grown.'7 The main military duties of soldiers during periods when they were not campaigning were serving as watchmen and scouts, while their non-military duties were farming and livestock herding, as evidenced by several woodslips mentioning dor 'unit of measurement for fields'. They also fished and hunted, as suggested by remains of string nets and slings.8

Thus, Mazar-tagh and Miran were military forts, but, like ancient Roman forts, they were also inhabited by civilians, including soldiers' families, merchants and others. This is why civilian administrative officials, such as rtse-rje 'town prefect' and mngan 'official of treasury' were placed there. As Stein pointed out, the life in these deserted forts must have been difficult,9 but it is likely that Tibetans preferred to settle there rather than in the more civilized oasis towns, namely, Khotan and Charklik.

ITNI...

List of Tibetan watchmen and their regiments

ITN1554			
Ho-tong gyu-mo	2 Tibetans and 2 Khotanese		
tshugs-pon	Myal-pa [stong-sde]	<	G.yo-ru
`og-pon	Skyi-stod [stong]-sde	<	Dbu-ru
ITN1574			
Gling-ring smug-po-tshal	2 Tibetans and 2 Khotanese		
tshugs-pon	Bzang-'ord [stong]-sde	<	?
`og-pon	Lang-myi'i sde	<	G.yas-ru
OTM 247			
Stag-rtse khri-skug-'jor	3 Tibetans		
Mya tshes-kong	Grom-pa'i sde	<	Ru-lag
Lo-nan myes-chung	Myang-ro'i sde	<	Ru-lag
Snya-shur stag-bzang	Rtsal-mo-pag gi sde	<	Zhangzhung-stod
Bye-ma 'dord	2 Tibetans and 1 Khotanese		
Phur-myi rke-dung	Yang-rtsang gi sde	<	Zhangzhung-smad?
Sro[sti?]-kro	'O-tso-pag gi sde	<	Zhangzhung-stod
ITN710 + 715 from Miran			
tshugs-pon	Kha-[dr]oʻl sde	<	Sumpa
`og-pon	Rgod tsang[]	<	Sumpa
byan-po	nag shod kyi sde	<	Sumpa

Tibetan administration of Khotan

What do the documents tell us about local people, especially Khotanese, under Tibetan rule? As we have seen, Khotanese were recruited and incorporated into the units of Tibetan watchmen tshugs as auxiliaries (cooks and assistant-cooks). In several paper documents, Khotanese watchmen are listed together with the unit tshar/tshard they belong to (see OTM 63-65, 134, 164, 278 in the list).

Thus, Khotanese belonging to the administrative units called tshard were recruited to serve as watchmen. Hill-station life must have been tough for them. One contract witnesses the execution of a Khotanese assistant-cook due to causing trouble (Contracts: 58, OTM 349). In order to commute his death sentence, he had to pay compensation of 4500 copper coins to the senior Tibetan members of his station.

Not surprisingly, some woodslips report the desertion and

execution of Khotanese watchmen (ITN1638). The native regime of the kingdom, however, seems to have been mostly retained. Fig. 6 shows another type of tally stick, thicker than *ri-zug* slips, with writing on three sides.

khram-bu (ITN1924)

A1. \$ /:/ lo sar gi bag pye dang chang spa [sa de /]

B1. chad de snga slad sdoms te chad pa chang bag pye

B2. khram ma bur bgos te bu yang

C1. yang spa' sa de la stsald /

'Barley-meal and beer for the new year's [salary for spa Sa-de] fell short; [the amount] deficient was summed up and [written on this] tally stick which was divided into a "child" (bur bgos te), and the "child" (bu) was also given to spa Sa-de.'

The word spa (Khot. spāta) is the title of a local Khotanese official,

List of Khotanese watchmen and their tshars

OTM 247	Li ce'u-'do	tshard Jam-nya		
OTM 134	Li ko-she	tshar Shir-no	Li bu-nyon	tshar Byi-ro
	Li rma-ga-lus	tshar Pan-ro-nya	Li ca-ma-po-la	tshar Sho-'o-nya
OTM 122	Li hul-{]	tshar Dro-dir	Li mu-[]	tshar Dos-gi-nyo
	Li bvi-de	tshar Bar-mo-ro-nya	Li bro-[]	tshar Ha-sa-par?-nya



Fig. 6 Tally stick.

This shows a tally stick with the wedge cut out from three sides, all containing writing concerning a deficit in the expected new year supply of barley-meal and beer.

The British Library, IOL Tib N 1924



Fig. 7 Tally stick wedge. This is apparently a kind of bu or 'child-tally' cut away from the main body of the tally stick. Interestingly, it is a food ticket for a-ma-cha (Khot. $\bar{a}m\bar{a}ca$), the highest Khotanese official. The British Library, IOL Tib N 1443

and Sa-de is his Khotanese name in Tibetan rendering. *Chang* 'beer' and *bag-pye* 'barley-meal' are written on notches representing the amounts. *Bu* 'child' (or *khram-bu*) must refer to the wedge or tally cut away from the right bottom corner, on which the same number of notches must have been cut and the name *spa* Sa-de must have been written. When he received the barley and beer later, he had to present the child-tally. Thus, it served as a food ticket for *spa* Sa-de.

Fig. 7 is apparently a similar kind of bu or 'child-tally' cut away from the main body of the tally stick. Interestingly, it is a food ticket for a-ma-cha (Khot. $\bar{a}m\bar{a}ca$) the highest Khotanese official.

Together with other paper documents (e.g. P.1089 and *Contracts*: 10, 15, 38), these woodslips clearly indicate that the local governmental organization, beginning from the Khotanese king and $\bar{a}m\bar{a}ca$, down to the local officials such as $sp\bar{a}ta$ and pharṣa (Tib. parsha), remained intact under Tibetan rule.

P.1089 (ll. 22-24)

dper gsol na / / li rje lta bu / [23] zho sha dang sbyar nas // bla nas thugs pags mdzad de / rgyal mtsha[n] stsal nas /:/ rgyal [cho]s gnang ba yang / / ll'i blon dngul pa'i 'og na / [24] mchIs pa lags / / ll'i a ma ca la stogs pa / thabs gs[e]r dang [g.yu] stsal ba la stsogs pa yang / rtse rje zangs pa'i 'og na mchis / /

'For example, the king of Khotan, having provided tribute [to Tibet] and having been given grace from above [i.e., from the Btsan-po], was granted a royal banner and allowed to practise the king's law. [But he] is inferior to the [Tibetan] official of silver rank [in charge of] Khotan. The Khotanese āmāca and so on, who are granted gold and turquoise ranks, are also inferior to the *rtse-rje* of the copper rank.'

As P.1089 also shows, the Khotanese king was subordinate to a Tibetan official in charge of Khotan (*Li'i blon*); the *āmāca* and

other high Khotanese officials were subordinate to a Tibetan *rtse-rje* 'town prefect' in Khotan (N 1769). Tibetan *rtse-rje* were both in Khotan and Mazar-tagh. But the highest Tibetan official was likely to be in Mazar-tagh, the headquarters of the Tibetan administration in Khotan, from which he supervised Khotan to the south and the frontiers to the east, north, and west. A rapid messenger service linked Mazar-tagh and Khotan five times a day (ITN2046).

In this way, Khotan – and probably also other small kingdoms, such as Nanzhao in Yunnan and Little and Great Balur in eastern Tokharistan and the Pamirs – were allowed to retain their regimes under the Tibetan colonialists, but they had to pay tribute and supply troops when ordered to do so by the Tibetan authorities.

Tibetan administration of Central Asia – Miran, Dunhuang, and Mkhar-tsan

In the other regions, military district governments or *khrom* were established in Tshal-byi, Kwa-cu, Dbyar-mo-thang and Mkhartsan, where more direct Tibetan administrations were established. These *khroms* comprised Bde-khams 'the province of Bde' and fell within the jurisdiction by the council of *Bde-blon* ministers.

Within each *khrom*, local administrative systems were mostly retained, and local officials held high civil administrative posts: for example, there was a Chinese *to-dog* (Chinese, *dudu* 都督) in Dunhuang. But the heads of the administration of each town, namely, *rtse-rje* 'town prefect', were occupied by Tibetans.

On the military side, local inhabitants, such as Chinese, 'A-zha and Mthong-khyab were organized into *stong-sde*. But the highest posts for each military unit (e.g., *stong-pon*) were mostly held by Tibetans, while local officials were appointed to be their assistants (e.g., *stong-zla*).

The head of a *khrom* was called a *dmag-pon* 'the highest-ranking military officer', but his title for the position was *ru-dpon*, the same title as *ru-dpon*, given to the highest official in the four horns

(Dbu-ru, G.yas-ru, etc.). In the examples below, ru-dpon clearly refers to the head of Tshal-byi khrom (ITN1016) and Mkhar-tsan khrom (P.1089), respectively. They are also called dmag-pon in the same contexts (ITN789 and P.1089).

ru-dpon of Tshal-byi (ITN1016) dmag-pon [of] Tshal-byi (ITN789) Various officials of Mkhar-tsan khrom beginning with the ru-dpon (P.1089:35)

dmag-pon from the Mkhar-tsan khrom (P.1089:30)

ru-dpon = head of 4 stong-sde in each ru = dmag-pon (administrative post) head of a khrom (military rank)

The term ru-dpon originally referred to the head of a ru (i.e., Dburu, G.yas-ru, etc.), more precisely the head of a half of a ru. Thus, there are two ru-dpons for each ru. A ru was divided into two parts, each comprised of four stong-sde and headed by a ru-dpon. A khrom seems to have contained around four stong-sde as well. For example, Mkhar-tsan khrom has four stong-sde, i.e., Tibetan, Sumpa, 'Azha, and Mthong-khyab stong-sde (P.1089), while Kwa-cu khrom had at least three Chinese stong-sde in Dunhuang and possibly one or two more in Kwa-cu (Guazhou) or Sug-cu (Suzhou). Thus, the head of a khrom may be considered to have been equal in rank to the ru-dpon in Tibet proper, and both had the military rank of dmag-pon and the administrative rank of ru-dpon, as shown in the above schema. The employment of the title ru-dpon for the head of a khrom in the frontier provinces suggests that the Tibetan govern-

ment may have intended eventually to extend their ru-system to Central Asia. But the central government of the Tibetan Empire collapsed in 842, and Tibetan domination of Central Asia also ended soon after. ¹⁰ However, the Tibetan language and culture, including Buddhism, survived among the local inhabitants of Central Asia as late as the tenth century – no doubt the heritage of the long-lasting Tibetan domination of Central Asia.

I hope this preliminary examination of woodslips has shed some light on how Tibetan military administration in Central Asia, particularly in Khotan and Lop-nor, was organized and functioned.

The following abbreviations are used in this essay:

Contract Text Text number in Takeuchi, Contracts.

ITN IOL Tib N numbers, requisition numbers for Tibetan woodslips in the British Library.

OTM Text number in Takeuchi, Old Tibetan Manuscripts.

P. Pelliot number as in Bibliothèque nationale de France.

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NOTES

- Uray, "KHROM", 310-18.
- 2 Stein, On Ancient Central-Asian Tracks, 114.
- 3 Stein, Serindia, pls. 50, 51 and 49.
- 4 Thomas, Tibetan Literary Texts, 181.
- 5 H.A. Jäschke, A Tibetan-English Dictionary (London: Routledge, 1881).
- 6 Uray and Uebach, "Clan versus Thousand-district", 913–16; Iwao. "Toban no ru to senko", 573–605.
- 7 Richardson, High Peaks, 172.
- 8 Stein, Serindia, pl. 50.
- 9 Stein, Ruins of Desert Cathay, 441.
- 10 Beckwith, The Tibetan Empire, 169-72.

OFFICIAL LIFE AT DUNHUANG IN THE TENTH CENTURY: THE CASE OF CAO YUANZHONG RONG XINJIANG

ost of the non-Buddhist documents discovered in 1900 in the Dunhuang Library Cave are official and private documents dating from the seventh to tenth centuries. In terms of Dunhuang history, these documents can be divided into periods of Chinese Tang (618–786), Tibetan (786–848) and Guiyijun (848–1036) rule, and provide a clear picture of the daily life of local Dunhuang officials. As an administrative geographical unit, Dunhuang was equivalent to a Chinese Tang prefecture, small compared to the more than 300 prefectures of its kind but unique because of the discovery of the Dunhuang documents. By focusing on the Guiyijun period from which most archives date, we can gain an unprecedented insight into official life at Dunhuang.

The prefecture comprising Dunhuang was called Shazhou and for some periods also incorporated the neighbouring district of Shouchang under its administration. It was located on the western edge of the Hexi Corridor (present-day Gansu Province) which linked it to China, and the eastern boundary of the area which China called the Western Regions (present-day Xinjiang). In 755 Chinese troops guarding the Western Regions and the Hexi Corridor were withdrawn east to Central China to help quell the An Lushan rebellion. The soldiers of the First Tibetan Empire took the opportunity to push north and, under a commander of *rtse-rje* (jie'er 節兒) rank, in 786 seized Dunhuang and placed it under the administration of the Guazhou garrison (kwa-cu *khrom*). The

Tibetans adhered to the existing system and organized the population of Dunhuang into various guilds according to their trade: the silk and cotton guild; the messengers' guild; and the monks and nuns guild. They later added the military divisions of Rgod-sar, Stong-sar and, in 824, Mthong-khyab.

In 848, Dunhuang landowner Zhang Yichao 張議潮 led a popular uprising and expelled the Tibetans from Shazhou and Guazhou. In 851 his envoy reached Chang'an, the capital of Tang China and Zhang was officially recognized as the Military Commander (*jiedushi* 節度使) of the Guiyijun 歸義單 (Army for the Return to Allegiance) holding jurisdiction over eleven prefectures: Sha 沙, Gua 瓜, Gan 甘, Su 肅, Yi 伊, Xi 西, Shan 鄯, He 河, Lan 蘭, Min 岷, and Kuo 廓. The Hexi Corridor and Yizhou (present-day Hami) were the most prosperous parts. The Guiyijun later decreased in area to encompass just Shazhou and Guazhou.

The early Guiyijun period (848–914) saw the role of Military Commander pass among members of the Zhang family and, although nominally a garrison under control of the Chinese Tang court, the area was fiercely independent. By the time the Cao 曹 family seized power – the late Guiyijun period (914–1036) – the fall of the Tang and the emergence of many autonomous city-states which formed a barrier between the Guiyijun and the Chinese court, meant that the area had become, in reality, an independent city-state itself.¹

'If we don't lean on the Emperor tall, Hexi will surely to marauders fall.'2

Although the Guiyijun of the tenth century basically constituted an independent city-state, it was throughout subservient to and dependent on the Chinese imperial court and even considered itself as the imperial representative in the north-west. At this time, the Hexi Corridor and the Western Regions were occupied by Uighurs who had been forced south-west from their empire in the Mongolian steppes by invaders and had established Uighur authority in Ganzhou and Xizhou. At Liangzhou, to the east, were Tibetans; Tanguts to the north; at Loulan, west of Dunhuang, the Zhongyun; and even further west there was the independent kingdom of Khotan. The Guiyijun had to survive among these powerful neighbours, and hence the sentiment expressed in the words from the Dunhuang song in the title of this section: without relying on Chinese power, the Guivijun would certainly fall into the hands of others.



In his role as Dunhuang's senior official, Cao Yuanzhong's most pressing concern was to maintain contact with the Chinese court using the long-standing system of tribute.3 In 949, he dispatched Infantry Trainer Liang Zaitong 梁再通 to pay tribute to the Later Han, then ruling northern China, offering 5 kg of sal ammoniac (Or.8210/S.4398, Fig. 2).4 At the end of 961, probably after hearing about the foundation of the Song dynasty (960-1279), Cao Yuanzhong and his son Cao Yanjing 曹延敬, Governor of Guazhou, sent envoys together to pay tribute to the Song emperor. Cao Yuanzhong subsequently received an imperial edict which renewed recognition of his own position as Military Commander of the Guiyijun, and bestowed Cao Yanjing with the honour of changing his name to Yangong 延恭.5 The envoy who brought the imperial edict to Dunhuang received Cao Yuanzhong's special hospitality and his arrival reinforced Cao Yuanzhong's control of the area, as well as enhancing his prestige among the other regional powers.

Compiling calendars and regulating seasons

The Chinese government had long produced an official calendar as a sign of its right to rule. A calendar displayed the moral perfection of the ruler in that it showed that he was in tune with events in the macro or cosmic sphere. His actions affected the balance of yin and yang and could lead to cosmic imbalance, displayed as unusual cosmic events such as eclipses or comets. The failure to predict these events was therefore a sign that the ruler was morally flawed. This had serious implications. The concept of 'Heaven's Mandate' (Tianming), propounded by Mencius, gave people the right to rebel if the current ruler had insufficient virtue to retain the mandate.

Communications in the tenth century between Dunhuang and China were not as efficient as they had been during the high Tang, and so it was not always possible to get up-to-date copies of the official calendars issued by the Chinese court.6 Since the calendar was required for regulating the official as well as the farming year, the Guiyijun had no alternative but to compute and compile its own calendar. Dunhuang propitiously had its own calendar expert Zhai Fengda 翟奉達. His family were from Xunyang (in eastern China's Jiangxi province) but Zhai Fengda was born and

Fig. 1 Cao Yuanzhong.

Cao Yuanzhong was the longest serving Guiyijun Military Commander (r. 944-74) at Dunhuang and had termed himself 'Great King' by the middle of his reign. Like all Dunhuang rulers in this period he recognized the importance of supporting local education, culture and Buddhism to give him legitimacy. Apart from paying for the repair of many caves at the Mogao site just outside Dunhuang, he also was the donor for cave 19 at Yulin, 90 km east of Dunhuang and, as was the custom, is portrayed on the lower register of the cave wall.

Courtesy of the Dunhuang Academy.

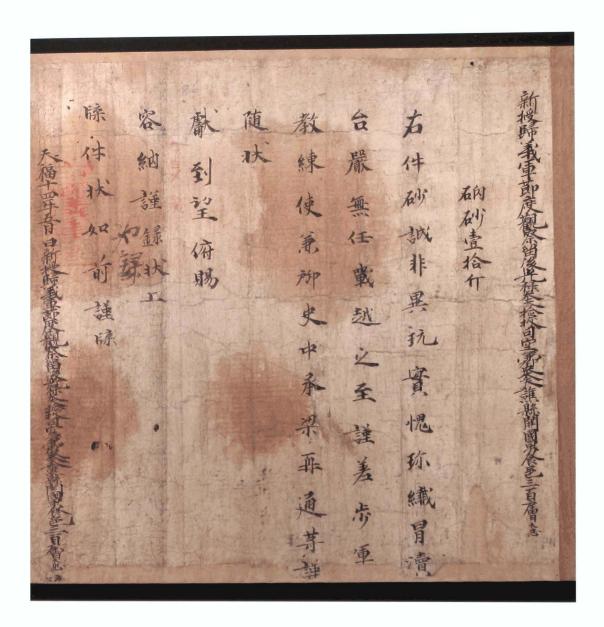


Fig. 2 Document recording tribute to China.

Cao Yuanzhong's most pressing concern was to maintain contact with the Chinese court using the long-standing system of tribute and in 949, as this manuscript records, he dispatched an envoy to pay tribute to the Later Han, then ruling northern China, offering 5 kg of sal ammoniac.

The British Library, Or.8210/S.4398 (detail)



educated in Dunhuang, and it was by his hand that Dunhuang obtained all its calendars for a considerable time.⁷ The British Library collections contain a detailed calendar compiled by Zhai Fendga, Erudite of the Provincial Academy with the rank of Court Gentleman for promoted service, in the year Xiande 3 Bingchen (956), which was copied out and collated by his disciple and apprentice Zhai Wenjin 翟文進, and finally presented to Cao Yuanzhong (cat. 160).8 This manuscript not only provides an original copy of the regulator of official life, but by examining the details of auspicious and inauspicious days we can also catch a glimpse of the beliefs of the ordinary people of Dunhuang, beliefs that trickled down from officialdom to all levels of society.

Establishing garrisons and returning land

Dealing with internal administration was a complex challenge for Cao Yuanzhong. One of his most pressing tasks was to consolidate border defences in order to prevent incursions. We are fortunate enough to have access to a notice issued by Cao Yuanzhong in 953 (Or.8210/S.8516(A)+(C), Fig. 3) addressed to the Third Army and local population and concerning his intention of establishing a new garrison, named Xinxiang, on the eastern borders of the Guiyijun. It urged those in favour to add their names to the bottom of the notice, adding that those officials willing to participate would have their debts cancelled. On the back are traces of paste and the signatures of people from the end of the notice which provide information on other administrative procedures that had taken place that year.

Other administrative tasks included the annual census, compilation of household registers, and land distribution. These were vital because Dunhuang was an oasis dependent on the water from irrigation canals, rivers and melted snow, with extremely limited cultivatable land and land disputes were frequent. It was essential to maintain good records in order to resolve such disputes. The Bibliothèque nationale de France collection contains an official document of the twelfth month of the second Kaiyun year (945) that records the investigation by Officer Wang Wentong 王文通, of the Guiyijun Left Army, of a certain Widow Ah-Long 阿龍 taking an individual to court for seizing her land (P.3257). This is an original document which shows that Cao Yuanzhong personally took charge of Widow Ah-Long's litigation case and ends with his verdict in her favour: 'This land belongs to Ah-Long and her descendants.'9 The St. Petersburg collection also contains a book of land

Fig. 3 Notice issued by Cao Yuanzhong.

We are fortunate enough to have access to this notice issued by Cao Yuanzhong in 953 addressed to the Third Army and local population and concerning his intention of establishing a new garrison, named Xinxiang, on the eastern borders of the Guiyijun. It urged those in favour to add their names to the bottom of the notice, adding that those officials willing to participate would have their debts cancelled. On the back are traces of paste as well as the signatures of certain people from the end of the notice which provide information on other administrative procedures that had taken place that year. The document has been reconstructed digitally from ten fragments and contains Cao's seal.

The British Library, Or.8210/S.8516(A) + (C)

records, dating from the first day of the first month of Guangshun year 2 (952) (Dx.2954a),10 drawn up by an official after land redistribution.

Ensuring smooth travel on the Silk Road while promoting cultural exchange

From the Han dynasty (221 BC-AD 220) onwards, Dunhuang had been one of the Chinese court's administrative outposts in the Western Regions. In 640 when the Chinese emperor Taizong sent troops to crush the Gaochang kingdom, the Dunhuang commander led his troops to join the Chinese in battle. From the midninth century onwards, Zhang Yichao was fighting on all sides just to establish the Guiyijun. His successors Zhang Huaishen 張淮深 and Zhang Chengfeng 張承奉 both undertook expeditions against the Uighurs in Ganzhou and Xizhou as well as other neighbouring states in order to maintain the Guiyijun's borders. But by the tenth century the Cao clan had managed to form marriage alliances with the Ganzhou Uighurs to their east and the Khotanese to their west. This was possible thanks to Cao Yijin 曹議金 (the first Guiyijun Military Commander of the Cao family) adopting a conciliatory policy towards his neighbours. Another reason could be that the Cao family were descendants of the Dunhuang Sogdians, who had a good relationship with Uighurs in the Tang period and were the same race as the Iranian Khotanese. This started the Cao family Guiyijun tradition of maintaining friendly relations with the surrounding states, even though there were still small skirmishes between them.11

In official documents of the Cao Yuanzhong period, we see records of the Guiyijun extending hospitality to envoys from many states. In 947 the Khotanese Chief Minister, an envoy, Princess Suding 速丁公主 and others visited Dunhuang and were entertained to a banquet in the Great Hall by Guiyijun officials. ¹² In 964, envoys from Ganzhou and Khotan also came to Dunhuang: Guiyijun officials held at least ten banquets during that year. ¹³ There are many similar examples in the accounting records of Dunhuang officials from all sections. Cao Yuanzhong also paid special attention to Buddhist monks in search of scriptures travelling to and from India and the following names are recorded under his rule: Fazong 法宗 (National Library of China (NLC), 冬字 63); Daoyuan 道圓 (The British Library, Or.8210/S.6264); Jicong 繼從 (NLC 新 0002, BnF, P.2023); Fajian 法堅 (BnF, P.2726); Master Xitian 西天大師 (BnF, P.2720). ¹⁴

The section of the Silk Road passing through Dunhuang in the mid-tenth century remained free from obstacles thanks to the efforts made by Cao Yuanzhong. As a result, Dunhuang gained both material and spiritual riches, while also exporting its own products and culture. In 966, Cao Yuanzhong hired a scribe to transcribe the Buddhanāma sutra in the Great King cave (98) at the Mogao Caves; apart from handing out a copy to each of the seventeen temples in Dunhuang, he had an extra copy made for the Uighur Kingdom at Turfan to help replenish the poor stock of Buddhist texts there (Ch.00207). ¹⁵ This instance is an outstanding example of Cao Yuanzhong promoting cultural exchange among the various states in his position as leader of the Dunhuang area.

Erecting statues and engraving Buddhist sutras

Apart from internal administration and foreign diplomacy, regional commanders also had to maintain an interest in local education and culture. For example, one Dunhuang manuscript¹⁶ refers to Dunhuang District Magistrate Zhao Zhiben 趙智本 to repair Zhang Zhi's inkwell 張芝墨池 in the fourth year of the Kaiyuan reign period (716).¹⁷ Local leaders used to repair historical sites as one way to keep control in the provinces. Cao Yuanzhong was naturally aware of the importance of such methods, although he put more emphasis on the building and repairing of statues in the Mogao Caves.

In 966, Cao Yuanzhong, now known under the title of Great King, went on a tour of the Mogao Caves with his wife. On seeing the statue of Maitreya (cave 96) in a considerable state of disrepair after years of neglect, Cao Yuanzhong commanded monks, laymen and officials to spare no effort in undertaking restoration. The following people from the Dunhuang garrisons and beyond took charge: Abbot Ganghui 鋼惠; Buddhist leader Yuanqi 懸敢; Buddhist leader Xinli 信力; Troop Commander and Police Patrol in Charge of the Royal Heirs Li Xingsi 李莘思. Twelve local temples each contributed twelve monks and fifty-six carpenters and ten plasterers were employed in this large-scale restoration operation. Cao Yuanzhong's wife, of the Zhai 翟 clan, personally provided

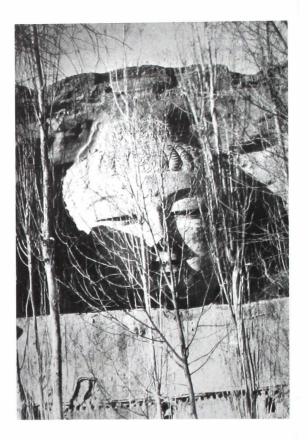


Fig. 4 Maitreya Buddha statue at the Mogao caves near Dunhuang.

In 966, Cao Yuanzhong went on a tour of the Mogao Caves with his wife and was dismayed to see the statue of Maitreya (cave 96) in a considerable state of disrepair after years of neglect. He commanded monks, laymen and officials to spare no effort in undertaking restoration.

This photograph was taken by the American explorer, Langdon Warner in 1924 after an earth-quake had destroyed the wooden pagoda usually obscuring the statue. The pagoda has since been restored and it is no longer possible to get as good a view of this statue.

Photograph by Langdon Warner, W89250-1, Historic Photographs and Special Visual Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University. Copyright President and Fellows of Harvard University. food for the workers (Ch.00207). ¹⁸ Today by examining a photograph taken by Langdon Warner in the 1920s we can see the appearance of this exquisite statue (Fig. 4). ¹⁹

Furthermore, Cao Yuanzhong was no different to previous Military Commanders in funding the construction of new caves in the Mogao complex, the most characteristic of which was the Hall of Mañjuśrī (cave 61). Mañjuśrī is the principal statue of this cave and, because by this time Chinese Buddhists believed that Mañjuśrī resided on Mount Wutai in north China, a huge painting of Mount Wutai covers the back wall. Following the reopening of communications between Dunhuang and the Chinese court from the beginning of the tenth century, poems, songs, ceremonies and hymns connected with Mount Wutai poured into Dunhuang. The cult of Mañjuśrī spread among the faithful at Dunhuang, reaching a peak by the time of Cao Yuanzhong which led him to acknowledge popular demand and build this Hall to Mañjuśrī.²⁰

Cao Yuanzhong also used the new technology of woodblock printing to disseminate Buddhism. In 949, he ordered Lei Yanmei 雷延美 to carve and circulate the *Vajracchedika-sūtra* to promote high moral standards (Or.8210/P.10, Or.8210/P.11, P.4515, P.4516).²¹ During the Ghost Festival of 947, Cao Yuanzhong had Lei Yanmei carve images of Avalokiteśvara and Vaiśravana to promote Bud-

dhism and to pray that 'the city god may enjoy peace and prosperity, that the whole prefecture may be tranquil, that the highways leading east and west may remain open, that evil-doers north and south may be reformed, that diseases may disappear, that the sound of the war-gong may no longer be heard, and that peace and happiness may prevail in every clime.' (Or.8210/P.8, Or.8210/P.9, P.4514).²² These images and prayers, carved under the orders of Cao Yuanzhong, are possibly the first material printed in Dunhuang itself. Their existence shows that local people were exposed to Buddhist culture and also testifies to technological progress at Dunhuang.

This examination of tenth-century official documents has offered insights on several aspects of official life in Dunhuang, particularly that of the role and responsibilities of Military Commander, Cao Yuanzhong.

Translated by Alastair Morrison

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NOTES

- For a summary of Dunhuang history, see Rong, Dunhuangxue shiba jiang,
- 2 P.3128 Dunhuang Songs "Wang Jiangnan", Jao, Airs de Touen-houang, 261.
- 3 A. Fujieda, "Shashū kigigun setsudoshi shimatsu", Töhö Gakuho, 13.1, 1942, 63-95; 13.2, 1943, 46-98.
- 4 Rong, Guiyijunshi yanjiu., 116 & 337. Sal ammoniac was used as a flux for soldering gold and silver and also as a medicine to treat bronchial congestions. See Schafer, Golden Peaches, 218.
- 5 Song Huiyao, Fanyi 5, Yongle dadian, 5770: 2538–2539. ('Gong' means' reverent', and for the imperial court to allow an individual to use it in his name would be a great honour [translator's note]).
- 6 Only the imperially-issued calendar was meant to be used: production of private calendars – or almanacs – was forbidden.
- 7 Fujieda, Tonkō rekijitsu fu, 434-439; Whitfield, Life Along the Silk Road, 189-205. For a life of Zhai Fengda see Teiser, The Ten Kings, 102-121, 242-3.
- 8 Deng, Dunhuang tianwen, 469-505.
- 9 Ikeda On, Chügoku kodai sekichö kenkyü, Tokyo 1979, 652-654; Hansen, Negotiating Daily Life, 68-74; . Whitfield, Life Along the Silk Road, 174-188.
- 10 Yamamoto and Dohi, Tun-huang and Turfan, 108.
- 1 Cao is a famous Chinese family name from Qiaojun in central China, but it was also given to the Sogdians in China. We can not find any trace of the

- former in Dunhuang documents before the appearance of Cao Yijin, so Cao Yijin may have come from a Sogdian family who had lived in Dunhuang for a long time. See Rong, *Dunhuang Guiyijun*, 65–72.
- 12 See P.2641.
- 13 Dunhuang yanjiu yuan MS + P.2629 Qiande ernian guiyijun yanei jiupoli.
- 14 Rong, Dunhuang wenxian, 959-61, 964.
- 15 Rong, "The Relationship of Dunhuang", 287-88.
- 16 Shazhou Tujing (P.2005).
- 7 It was said that Zhang Zhi of the late Han washed his calligraphy brush so often in a temple pond that the water turned to ink, and the site became famous, the pond referred to as 'Zhang Zhi's inkwell'.
- 18 Waley, Paintings, 316–19; for new text see Rong, Haiwai Dunhuang Tulufan, 10–11 (record 17).
- 19 This statue is now obstructed by a nine-storey building, so travellers cannot easily see the front of the Buddha. In 1924, when Langdon Warner visited an earthquake a few years earlier had caused the building to crumble. In Warner, The Long Old Road, one can see the front view of this statue.
- 20 See Rong, Guiyijunshi yanjiu, 247-65.
- 21 Giles, Catalogue, 279-80; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, 101-06.
- 22 Translation taken from Giles, Catalogue.

WHERE CHAN AND TANTRA MEET: TIBETAN SYNCRETISM IN DUNHUANG SAM VAN SCHAIK AND JACOB DALTON

Throughout most of the first millennium of the common era, the wealthy trading town of Dunhuang was a crucial point of commercial and cultural exchange on the Silk Route. At the Buddhist cave complex near the town, Buddhism was enriched by a cross-fertilization of religious traditions from India, China, Tibet, and various Central Asian centres. One particularly fruitful period for this cultural interaction was the ninth and tenth centuries.

Dunhuang was under Tibetan control between 786 and 848, and its loss in 848 was just one aspect of the wider disintegration of the ruling Tibetan dynasty. Already a few years earlier, Tibetan imperial patronage of Buddhism had become untenable and the monasteries of Central Tibet had been closed. According to traditional Tibetan historical sources, the collapse of royal patronage signalled the beginning of a 'dark period', a time when Buddhism went into severe decline. According to these accounts, it was only with the resurgence of a centralized political power in the late tenth century that Buddhism began to recover. Against this view, more recent scholarship has suggested that the dark period was in fact a crucial stage in the Tibetan assimilation of Buddhism.1 With no controlling religious authority, Tibetans were able to develop their own Buddhist traditions, drawing upon those of their neighbours in China and India, as well as their own cultural concerns. Tibetans living in Dunhuang after it was regained by China loyalists were particularly well situated to absorb these various influences.

Thus any Tibetan Buddhist manuscripts from Dunhuang dating from the so-called 'dark period' might be expected to show signs of cross-cultural interaction or even deliberate conflation of religious practices from different sources. Reasoning from both factors just mentioned (Dunhuang's position on the Silk Route, and the disappearance of the central Tibetan religious orthodoxy) one might expect such interaction and syncretism to be commonplace. However, significant examples of this kind of activity remain few.

In the course of our researches into Tibetan tantra at Dunhuang, a group of five manuscripts has come to our attention.² Taken together, they reveal an unusually clear example of a Buddhist author active in tenth-century Dunhuang, combining techniques from two normally distinct traditions: the Chinese lineages of Chan (from the Sanskrit *dhyāna*, 'contemplation', and 'Zen' in Japanese), and the yogic meditation practices of Mahāyoga, derived from the Indic tantras.³ The manuscripts combine these techniques in complex and innovative ways, with technical terminology that reveals an extensive knowledge of both traditions. In fact, the degree of syncretism seen in these manuscripts is unique. A few other Dunhuang manuscripts assert the equivalence of Chan and Mahāyoga, but such claims have so far seemed largely rhetorical. The identification of this group of manuscripts reveals a remarkably sophisticated merging of traditions, a syncretism on a level

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one might expect in a vibrant and multicultural religious centre like Dunhuang.

The five manuscripts first caught our attention because of their distinctive handwriting. Closer examination confirmed that all five pieces were almost certainly penned by the same hand. (For the reader's benefit, the first folio of each manuscript is reproduced here – see Fig. 1.) In addition to their more obvious orthographic similarities, all five manuscripts open with a similar decorative marker; each line ends with a punctuation dot (tsheg) before the end-of-clause marker (shad). Any partial or blank lines, as at the end of a text, are filled with a series of double-shad markers; and all five manuscripts are decorated with red ink, the shade of which is identical in four.⁴

Having identified these five works as a cohesive group, we still needed to determine the nature of their relationship to each other. Just because they share a single scribe, they are not necessarily by the same author; it remained possible that the five manuscripts were simply the results of one scribe copying the works of various authors. In fact, three of the texts are almost certainly the work of a single author. As will become clear, the contents of PT626, PT634, and PT699 reveal a very close relationship. PT808 is probably also by the same author, while the authorship of PT322 remains uncertain.

Only one of these five manuscripts has received any attention in modern scholarship. In 1979, Okimoto Katsumi identified PT699 as a commentary to another short work found elsewhere in the Dunhuang collections and ascribed to the Chan patriarch Bodhidharma. Okimoto's brief study has recently been supplemented by Carmen Meinert. Meinert emphasizes the syncretic character of PT699, arguing that it is a Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) commentary on a Chan text. The Great Perfection — a system of immediate access to enlightenment derived from the Mahāyoga tantras — was certainly known to the author of our manuscripts. However, we will argue that PT699 is better understood as a Mahāyoga commentary on a Chan text.

There is no doubt that the writer of our group of manuscripts was aware of the Great Perfection. PT322, an extended prayer to the wrathful and the peaceful buddhas of the Māyājāla *maṇḍala*, mentions the term 'great perfection' three times.⁷ Furthermore the

Fig. 1 The first folio of five Tibetan manuscripts in the same hand.

The five manuscripts shown here display a distinctive handwriting and were almost certainly penned by the same hand. In addition to their more obvious orthographic similarities, all five manuscripts open with a similar decorative marker; each fine ends with a punctuation dot (ts/leg) before the end-of-clause marker (shad). Any partial or blank lines, as at the end of a text, are filled with a series of double-shad markers; and all five manuscripts are decorated with red ink, the shade of which is identical in four.

The Bibliotheque nationale de France. Pelliot Tibétain 322. 636, 634, 698, 808.

colophon to PT699 employs the term *Atiyoga*, another name for the Great Perfection. The passage in question describes three kinds of teachers: the teacher of Atiyoga, the teacher of the sutras, and the teacher of the tantras.

What is a master who teaches Atiyoga like? [Like] the great garuda who cuts through the sky yet is aware of all living beings, he clarifies the vehicles individually, yet cuts through space. Clarifies means he teaches the great meaning without mixing up [the vehicles]. Like the sky-soaring garuda, he draws forth the greatness of the meaning.

What is a master who teaches the sutras like? He teaches the divisions of the paths which one should traverse.

Just as the king of the realm rules directly, a master who teaches the meaning of the tantras cuts directly to the blissful union of the words. He teaches to be appropriate that which is inappropriate for the inferior scholars who [teach as if] dripping [water] onto rocks. Thus faults themselves are good qualities. In crowded places he teaches the dharma. Using common speech full of meaning, he understands its inner resplendence. He teaches with a mind that is like a hidden tortoise. Understanding the hidden secret is the quality of such a master. Thus it is said.⁸

Thus, according to this passage, the Atiyoga teacher teaches from on high, simultaneously transcending and distinguishing all the differences at a glance. The teacher of the sutras involves himself in the details of the gradual path to enlightenment. And the tantric teacher is immersed in the mundane world while maintaining a secret majesty.

One cannot conclude on the basis of this passage that the author considers himself to be an Atiyoga teacher, and his commentary a Great Perfection text. In fact, the body of the commentary makes no reference to the Great Perfection (or Atiyoga), but does make a number of indirect and allusive references to the teachings of Mahāyoga. Thus there is a case for arguing that the author considered his commentary to be an example of the third teaching method, that of the tantric master. On the other hand, it is quite possible that the colophon is intended to show the author to be an embodiment of all three types of teacher, applying the method of each wherever appropriate. This would be in accordance with the syncretism of his text.

The extent of Mahāyoga influence in PT699 can only be fully appreciated through the lens of the author's other two major works, PT626 and PT634, which have previously gone unnoticed. Both are commentaries on the same concise Mahāyoga ritual text. The greater part of the root text is based on the practice of the three samādhis, a triad commonly associated with Mahāyoga practice. In elaborating upon the root text, both PT626 and PT634 employ key terms drawn from Chan meditation systems. This syncretism is mirrored in PT699, in which the author applies the same structural

grid of the three samādhis to the Bodhidharma Chan text, placing the entire Chan text in a Mahāyoga framework. The details of this creative reading are explained in the following pages.

The three samādhis

The standard Mahāyoga Buddhist ritual is divided into two stages, the development stage (Skt. utpannakrama; Tib. bskyed rim) and the perfection stage (Skt. sampannakrama; Tib. rdzogs rim). In the first stage, the visualization of the mandala is gradually developed, after which it is worshipped and blessings are received. In the second perfection stage, the visualization appears instantaneously and is typically used in a ritualized sexual practice.

Generally speaking, the three samādhis are associated with the development stage, being the three phases by which the visualization is generated. In the first, the thusness samādhi (de bzhin nyid kyi ting nge dzin), the practitioner meditates on emptiness. Then in the second, the all-illuminating samādhi (kun tu snang gi ting nge 'dzin), the emptiness is activitated; energized by compassion, a brightly luminous opening is created for the manifestation to appear. Finally in the causal samādhi (rgyu'i ting nge dzin), a seed-syllable appears from which the entire visualization unfolds.

The three samādhis appear throughout the Dunhuang Mahāyoga literature, receiving detailed commentary in several manuscripts. ¹⁰ PT626 and PT634 are particularly elaborate examples. Both are commentaries on the same root text, whose provenance has yet to be identified. Both are almost certainly by the same author, indicated by many identical phrases and terms. ¹¹

In both commentaries, the practice begins with three syllables, $Om\ Am\ Hum$, visualized at one's head, throat, and heart. Each syllable radiates a light that purifies, respectively, one's body, speech and mind. This purification process is likened to that of extracting silver from a stone through melting and hammering.

After this initial purification, one settles into the correct seated meditation pose, defined by five mūdras (phyag rgya lnga):
(i) covering the left hand with the right and (ii) the right leg with the left, (iii) straightening the posture, (iv) resting the eyes on the tip of the nose, and (v) pressing the tongue against the roof of the mouth. So seated, one 'views the mind' (sems la lta ba) and meditates on just that. This practice is described by means of three pairs of metaphors: (i) poison and its cure, (ii) a watchman and a thief, (iii) a lamp and a lake.

Next comes the all-illuminating samādhi, which receives the least attention of the three. PT626 says almost nothing, but PT634 describes the samādhi with a particularly striking metaphor:

When there is an opening in the clouds in the sky, the moon and many stars are revealed. Similarly, within the thusness samādhi which is like the sky, a gap opens in the great omniscient wisdom, the clouds. Then the syllable of oneself, a white A endowed with the causal consciousness, abiding as the cause, arises brightly in the sky.¹²

The metaphor of the sky and the use of the syllable A to mark the transition from the all-illuminating samādhi to the causal samādhi is common in early descriptions of the all-illuminating samādhi. In the causal samādhi, the visualized manḍala palace is generated out of the syllables, with oneself sitting at the centre as the principal deity. Lights are projected and reabsorbed, blessing the practitioner's mind.

This marks the end of the third samādhi and thus the development stage, though this is not made explicit here. The root text divides the remaining meditations into four further perfection stage samādhis. The first of these four is a meditation on the visualization of one's own body, speech and mind as those of the deity. The second samādhi involves the recitation of the deity's heart mantra. The third is a sexual practice involving the manipulation of psycho-physical energies. ¹⁴ Finally in the fourth samādhi the visualization is dissolved, the 108-syllable mantra of the deity Vajrasattva is recited for purification, and one rests in the enlightened state. The description of the manipulation of psycho-physical energies is unusual for the Dunhuang collections and may indicate a relatively late date (given that the Dunhuang cave was sealed at the beginning of the eleventh century) for our group of manuscripts.

Chan elements in PT626 and PT634

Thus the texts of PT626 and PT634 present a detailed discussion of a Mahāyoga meditation practice in terms of the three samādhis. Despite being firmly situated in the context of Mahāyoga meditation, both texts incorporate substantial elements of Chan meditation practice. All of these elements are found in the first of the three samādhis, the thusness samādhi.

As we have seen, the first samādhi is typically a meditation on the emptiness of the mind and phenomena. The presentation of the first samādhi in PT626 and PT634 is unusual in that it draws as much on Chan terminology and practices as on Vajrayāna sources. Specifically, the two commentaries as well as the root text associate the first samādhi with the practice of 'viewing the mind' (sems la lta). 15 This is an internally-directed analysis with the aim of establishing that there is no actual object of the referent 'mind'. Thus the mind is examined for features like shapes and colours. Such techniques are not unique to Chan Buddhism, but the association of the techniques with the phrase 'viewing the mind' (Ch. kan xin 看心) is distinctive of the Northern Chan schools. 16 These techniques are frequently discussed in the Dunhuang Chan manuscripts, including the fragments attributed to the Chan master Heshang Moheyan 和尚摩訶征.17

While a certain degree of conceptual examination is clearly required for the practice of viewing the mind, in PT626 and PT634 the goal is a lack of mental activity. This is implied by the statement that viewing the mind is the means (thabs) and the mind's nonabiding is wisdom (shes rab). The state resulting from viewing the mind is described as non-thought (mi bsam), non-conceptualization (mi rtog), and not engaging the mind (yid la mi byed pa), three

central terms in Tibetan Chan, particularly in the texts attributed to Moheyan. 18

Other possible references to Chan teachings in PT626 and PT634, less clear though still suggestive, appear in the three pairs of metaphors discussed above. In one metaphor the practice of mindfulness is compared to a watchman spotting a thief. The metaphor of the thief appears in the teachings attributed to Moheyan, as a symbol for the distractions of the six senses. The metaphor also appears in the writings of Shenxiu 神秀 (606?-706), exponent of the Northern Chan doctrines and the teacher of Moheyan's teachers. 19 Finally, the metaphor of a butter lamp, used in PT634 to illustrate the practice of insight meditation (lhag mthong),20 also appears in the Shenxiu's writings on insight meditation, and is suggestive of the 'inner illumination' (Ch. fan zhao 返照) taught by Mohevan.21

Once the discussion of the thusness samādhi is concluded, there is no further drawing upon Chan practices and teaching techniques. As we have seen, there is a great deal of overlap between the Chan elements of PT626 and PT634 and the teachings of Shenxiu and Moheyan. While Shenxiu is representative of the Northern Chan, the position of Mohevan is usually taken to be a later development which combined the Northern Chan practices with elements from other strands of Chan.²² The Chan affiliations of the author of our own texts are further elucidated in his other work, PT699.

Chan elements in PT699

Like the two commentaries discussed in the previous section, PT699 is based on a short root text, but in this case the root text appears in several other places. It is quoted in the Chan chapter of the Lamp for the Eyes in Contemplation (Bsam gtan mig sgron) under the title Brief Precepts (lung chung). It also appears elsewhere in the Dunhuang manuscripts on its own (ITJ689),²³ in a Chan compilation (PT121) and in an incomplete and previously unnoticed manuscript, where it appears in the company of some notes on the Vajrayāna (ITJ1774).²⁴ We can conclude that the text enjoyed some popularity throughout Tibet in the ninth and tenth centuries.

The Brief Precepts is a series of instructions on the practice of contemplation. It begins with an evocation of the compassionate motivation to end the suffering of all sentient beings. Then the meditation proper is discussed, beginning with the practice of viewing the mind, and moving on quickly to the instruction not to think nor to conceptualize. The text then describes the resulting realization of emptiness and the equality of sanisara and nirvana, from which the mind is liberated of itself (rang grol) with no need to obstruct or suppress concepts. The meditator is instructed to remain in an unmoving samādhi, while the meditative experience becomes increasingly subtle, peaceful and clear. The Brief Precepts concludes with the following statement: 'This dharma was entrusted to the great Kāsyapa. Dharmātala meditated in this way.²⁵ Thus the author of PT699 would have been aware that

the subject of his commentary was firmly based in the lineages of

PT699 explains the practice of meditation with the instruction to arrange the body in meditation posture, to turn away from the objects of the six senses, view the mind, and remain in nonthought and non-conceptualization. The process of viewing the mind is described as an intellectual enquiry, similar to the method of PT626 and PT634, but with considerably greater detail. This is the longest section of commentary. The same injunction to turn away from six senses and to view the mind is found in the teachings of Moheyan.26

Turning to the practice of non-thought and non-conceptualization, the author of PT699 employs the Chan teaching of the 'three phrases', attributed in the Lidai fabao ji 歷代法寶記 to Wuxiang 無相. Wuxiang (684-762) was an exponent of the Baotang school of Chan based in Chengdu in southwestern China. This school seems to have exerted a direct influence on Tibetan Chan, which has been described as a dovetailing of late Northern and Baotang Chan.²⁷ In our commentary, PT699, the three phrases (man ngag gsum) are mentioned by name: non-mind (mi sems), non-mindfulness (mi dran) and illusoriness (sgyu ma). The original Chinese phrases of Wuxiang (wu nian, wu yi, wu wang 無念無義無忘) differ in that the last means something more like 'non-forgetting'. 28 This difference is clarified somewhat in other Tibetan Chan texts, where the third phrase is rendered as 'the illusory mind not emerging' (sgyu ma'i sems mi 'byung ba).²⁹

PT699 also ties the direct experience of the mind as nonexistent to the practice of the 'single-method samādhi' (ting nge 'dzin tshul cig).30 This may be a reference to the similar term (yi xing san mei 一行三昧) which appears in the Platform Sutra. There, it appears in passages criticizing the Northern Chan, indicating that the single-method samādhi was associated with that school.31

PT699 does not employ the richness of metaphors found in PT626 and PT634, but we do see again the metaphor of the sense objects as thieves and the awareness of them as a watchman. Here the Brief Precepts refers to 'being aware of the arisings' (byung tshor).32 The commentary compares the arisings (byung) to thieves. and awareness (tshor) to a watchman. This rather compacted discussion is clarified by a passage attributed to Moheyan in which he explains that, just as when one is aware of a thief, the thief cannot enter one's home, so when one is aware of the arising thoughts and concepts, one is liberated from them.33 The wording of this passage is very similar to our commentary. Of particular note is PT699's use of the word tshor in the sense of 'aware'. The term has a specific meaning in Chinese treatises and translations of Chinese sutras from this period; rather than standing for the Sanskrit vedanā ('feeling' or 'sensation') as it does in translations of Sanskrit texts, it stands for the Chinese jue # meaning to understand, to be aware, to wake up?34

This wakeful awareness is described in PT699 as 'the antidote to the śrāvakas' pacification'.35 The pacification practice of the śrāvakas, meditators seeking a personal peace without the bodhisattva's wider motivation, is used in many Chan texts as a symbol of one extreme in meditation practice. Unsurprisingly then, it appears more than once in the writings attributed to Moheyan.³⁶

The author's position within Chan

As we have seen in the above discussion, there are many points of similarity between the Chan doctrines presented in our three works – PT626, PT634 and PT699 – and in other Dunhuang Chan manuscripts. The great compilation of Tibetan Chan material PT116 is a rich source for similar terminology. Interestingly, most of the points of similarity in PT116 occur in a discrete section of the manuscript that is framed as a treatise written as an aid to *Mahāyogins*, a term usually used to refer to tantric practitioners. This is not the only instance of the use of the term *Mahāyoga* in manuscripts otherwise entirely Chan in character, a phenomenon we will return to in the conclusion.³⁷

Another Chan compilation, PT121, exhibits even stronger links to our group of documents. PT121 contains five works, of which the third is a copy of the *Brief Precepts*. The fourth is a discussion of the three phrases of Wuxiang, and the fifth is an analysis of the meaning of the three jewels (*dkon mchog gsum*). The third and fourth texts are clearly linked thematically to PT699. The fifth is similar to another of our group of manuscripts, PT808, which is also a discussion of the three jewels. The two discussions of this topic differ in certain details, but use much of the same terminology. Thus we can infer that the compiler of the PT121 collection moved in the same Chan circles as the author of our group of documents.³⁸

The many links with the teachings of Heshang Moheyan, in the Tibetan Dunhuang documents ascribed to him and in the Chinese record of the Samye debate, make it quite clear that the author of our texts was following a tradition similar to that of Moheyan, if not the actual lineage of this famous teacher. ³⁹ In short, the Chan background of our author is what one would expect of a Tibetan Chan teacher: late Northern Chan with elements of Baotang.

A Mahāyoga interpretation of a Chan text: PT699

Thus in writing his commentary to the Chan text known as the *Brief Precepts*, the author of PT699 was clearly drawing on a specific tradition of Chan teachings, and it is quite possible to read the text as a straightforward Chan commentary. Yet when read alongside PT626 and PT634, certain references to Mahāyoga practice become apparent, suggesting that the author also had in mind the three *samādhi* structure when composing this commentary. That is to say, his commentary interprets a Chan text in terms of Mahāyoga ritual techniques.

There may have been some precedent for this. Some brief notes on the Vajrayāna are appended to the version of the *Brief Precepts* found in ITJ1774 (Fig. 2). The notes mention three well-known Mahāyoga teachers by name: Ācārya Buddhagupta,



Fig. 2 The Brief Precepts.

The Britis Library, IOL Tib J 1774

The British Library, IOL Tib J 1774

Śrīmañju (= Mañjuśrīmitra) and Hūṃkara. ⁴⁰ This suggests that the *Brief Precepts* may have enjoyed a wider popularity among the Maĥāyoga practitioners around Dunhuang.

In the first part of PT699 the author discusses the nature of ignorance. Among several definitions, ignorance is said to be 'not seeing the face of the deity and the master.'41 The reference to seeing the face of the deity carries a strong implication of the presence of Vajrayāna practice. This is no more than a hint by our author, but it sets the scene for the meditation instructions which follow.

At the beginning of the section on meditation, in describing the posture to be assumed for viewing the mind, the author uses the system of the five mūdras. ⁴² We have already observed these same five instructions in PT626 and PT634, where the author discusses the posture to be assumed for the practice of the thusness samādhi. ⁴³ Similar posture instructions are found in many Tibetan Chan texts, but not this set of five. ⁴⁴ On the other hand, the same five appear in other Dunhuang Mahāyoga texts, as the posture to be assumed for performing the three samādhis. ⁴⁵ Thus these five mūdras seem to be derived from Mahāyoga practices of this period.

Having assumed the physical posture for Mahāyoga practice, PT699 instructs the meditator in the Chan method of 'viewing the mind'. As we have seen in PT626 and PT634, this method is also applied by our author in the context of the thusness samādhi. The 'three phrases' of Wuxiang which appear in this section of PT699 have an analogous triad in PT634, where the three pairs of metaphors are arranged into: (i) the entrance, which is means and wisdom; (ii) the remedy, which is mindfulness and alertness; (iii) the method for settling the mind, which is calm abiding and insight. The position of this triad in PT634 mirrors the position of the three phrases in PT699: both come immediately after the emptiness of mind has been established. It seems then that the three phrases of Wuxiang are employed as a suggestive allusion to the three pairs of metaphors.

Having discussed the three phrases of Wuxiang, PT699 goes on to compare meditation to the reflections of the sun and moon. Similarly PT634, after discussing the analogous triad, calls attention to the reflective quality of meditation, like reflections of the moon and the stars in water. ⁴⁷ In PT634 this image bridges the thusness samādhi to the all-illuminating samādhi, symbolizing the transition from the empty aspect of the mind to the luminous aspect of compassion.

A few lines further on, PT699 states that 'any further changes are equal in the mere $A.^{148}$ The significance of this syllable A is not explained, but is easy to identify when cross-referenced with PT626 and PT634, in which a white syllable A signifies the pure consciousness, and represents the transition from the general luminosity of the all-illuminating $sam\bar{a}dhi$ to the detailed visualizations of the causal $sam\bar{a}dhi.^{49}$ We have seen that the white A (or in some cases Om) is commonly used in Dunhuang Mahāyoga texts as the initial visualization in the causal $sam\bar{a}dhi.^{50}$

The author of PT699 does not suggest that the meditator go

on to perform the tantric visualizations. This would be rather a stretch when the root text, the *Brief Precepts*, remains firmly on the theme of non-conceptual meditation right to its end. However, the commentary does build one further bridge across to the world of Mahāyoga (before the final explicit syncretism of the colophon discussed in the introduction). After a statement that equality (*cha snyom*) requires a full abandonment of self, the author asks, 'where is this shown?'51 In Tibetan treatises this rhetorical question is usually followed by a citation intended to validate the position of the author as not mere personal opinion. Here, the citation is not from a Chan text, but from the Mahāyoga treatise *Questions and Answers on Vajrasattva* (*rdo rje sems pa' zhus lan*) which was known in Dunhuang.⁵² This suggests that PT699 was aimed at an audience both interested in Mahāyoga meditation and familiar with the main texts of the Tibetan Mahāyoga traditions.

Thus the author of PT699 seems to have directed his commentary on the Chan Brief Precepts toward the same audience as his Mahāyoga commentaries, an audience well-versed in tantric development stage practices. His allusions to elements of these practices, and the way in which his Chan and Mahāyoga commentaries mirror each other's structure brings the Chan text into the realm of Mahāyoga.

Syncretism in Dunhuang and the 'dark period'

In a groundbreaking article on Mahāyoga texts from Dunhuang, Kenneth Eastman noted the existence of a Tibetan Chan manuscript from Dunhuang (PT116) that is presented as a teaching on Mahāyoga. 'But', he wrote, 'there is nothing in it that suggests any direct borrowing from Mahāyoga other than its title. There is, in other words, not even a trace of any attempt at synthesizing the two traditions, but it is rather simply a Ch'an treatise masquerading as a treatise on Mahāyoga.'53

As noted above, there are a number of Chan manuscripts which use the term Mahāyoga in this way, without incorporating any actual Mahāyoga terms or practices. Given the existence of the syncretism in the texts discussed above, the judgement that such treatises are merely masquerading as Mahāyoga is thrown into question. It is more likely that a number of Chan texts were in fact well studied within Mahāyoga circles. Even when such works made no explicit attempt to incorporate Mahāyoga elements, they would have been understood within the context of Mahāyoga practice, a point of view which was only occasionally made explicit in works like the ones presented here.

The kind of syncretism seen in the group of manuscripts discussed in this study contrasts dramatically with the conservatism of the later tradition. After the 'dark period', all visible influences of Chan were eliminated from Tibetan Buddhism, and Mahāyoga and Chan were carefully distinguished from each other. ⁵⁴ This trend can already be observed in the tenth-century *Lamp for the Eyes in Contemplation* by the great central Tibetan scholar Gnubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes. This influential work represented a crucial step

in the codification of Chan, Mahāyoga and the Great Perfection as distinct vehicles to enlightenment.⁵⁵ In comparison, our group of manuscripts exhibits a remarkable freedom, blurring the lines between meditation systems which were elsewhere kept quite distinct. The system of practice set out in these manuscripts did not survive into the later Tibetan tradition. Indeed, this creative integration of meditation practices derived from both Indic and Chinese traditions could only have been possible during the earliest

years of Tibetan Buddhism, when doctrinal categories were still forming, and in this sense it represents an important stage in the Tibetan assimilation of Buddhism.

Sam van Schaik and Jacob Dalton both work on the International Dunhuang Project at the British Library on an AHRB-funded collaborative project with SOAS to catalogue and digitize the Tibetan tantric manuscripts from Dunhuang.

NOTES

- 1 On Tibet's 'dark period', see Snellgrove, Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, 451-70; Karmay, The Great Perfection, 8-10; Sørensen, Tibetan Historiography, 423-39; Yamaguchi, "The Fiction of King Dar-ma's Persecution of Buddhism"; Kapstein, The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism.
- 2 The five manuscripts in question are all in the Pelliot collection at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris. They are all prefixed PT (Pelliot tibétain) and are numbered 322, 626, 634, 699 and 808.
- 3 The term Mahāyoga (rnal 'byor chen po) appears in the Dunhuang manuscripts as a common name for tantric practice, particularly denoting the practices derived from a genre of tantras which appeared from the mid-seventh century onwards, including the Guhyagarbha tantra, the Sarvabud-dhasamāyoga tantra and the Guhyasamāja tantra. Other terms used to define tantric practice in the Dunhuang manuscripts include Vajrayāna (rdo ric'i theg pa) and 'secret mantra' (gsang sngags).
- 4 The single-folio PT808 uses a slightly lighter shade of red ink. PT808 is also the only one of the manuscripts to contain no Mahāyoga material, so that it stands on the edge of our core group. The Dunhuang collections contain several other manuscripts which may share the same hand, ITJ597, PT958, PT149 and PT592. These are not included in the present study because they do not directly relate to Chan or Mahāyoga. Generally speaking, these other manuscripts share an interest in Buddhist historical narrative. Thus ITJ597 is a history of Khotan couched as a prophecy (Li yul gi dgra bcom bas lung bstan pa), and PT149 ties the activities of Tibetan king Khri srong Ide brtsan to the narrative events of the Gandhavyūha Sūtra. As well as differing thematically from our core group of manuscripts, none of these others contains all of the orthographic features described above.
- 5 Okimoto, "Tonkö shutsudó". On p. 423 n. 8, Okimoto identifies two further copies of the root text, in IT1689 and PT121/3. Since then another copy has been identified in the manuscript IT11774.
- 6 Meinert, "Chinese Chan and Tibetan Rdzogs chen".
- 7 PT322, f. B(1)r.1; f. B(1)r.3-4; f. B(1)v.7.
- 8 The colophon is difficult to follow due to its arrangement on the page. We believe the following is the correct reading of the lines, PT699, st. at iyo ga'chad pi slobs dpon ci lta bu zhe na/khyung chen nam par gcod kyang skye'gro la lus shes/ theg pa so sor gsal yang spyi rgya rlabs kyis gcod/ gsal la ma'dres che pi don ston pa/khas lding khyung ltar don gi che ba 'byin/ mdo sde'chad pi slobs pon ci lta bu zhe na/'grod par bya ba'i lam gi bye brag la/ ngang pi rgyal po myi 'gyog gcas su gcod/ de bzhin slobs dpon rgyud kyi don'chad pa/ tshig gi bde sbyor myi 'khyog gcas su gcod/ smad pi rna bu brag la'dzag pa'i/ myi 'tsham' tsham bar 'chad pas/ skyon nyid yon btan yin/ mang po'dus pi nang na/ chos 'chad pa/ skad byings don dang ldan bas/ khong bkrar go/ ru sbal skungs pa lta bu'i blos 'chad pa/ gub pa'i sbas pa de shes slobs dpon yon yin/zhes byung ngo.
- When the commentary was composed (probably in the tenth century), the line dividing Atiyoga from Mahayoga was still indistinct. The Dunhuang materials represent an early stage in the development of Atiyoga, when it was

- still in the process of separating from the wider tantric matrix from which it arose. The colophon to PT699 implies that, for the author at least, Atiyoga was less a strictly defined textual category than a teaching method, a hermeneutical approach that could be applied to a variety of texts. For more on the early development of the Great Perfection/Atiyoga in the Dunhuang manuscripts, see Van Schaik, "The Early Days of the Great Perfection" and Dalton, "The Development of Perfection".
- 10 See, for example, ITJ716/1 and ITJ437.
- 11 That said, PT626 is generally briefer in its comments. The work actually has two parts. The first part delineates a hermeneutical system that differs somewhat from the principal system used in the second part. Thus the first system divides the text into seven general topics, while the second uses only four topics.
- 12 PT634, f. 2r.3. nam kha la sprin gis go phye nas gza' skar mang po go phye ba dang 'dra' bar de bzhin nyid ki ting nge 'dzin nam ka dang 'dra ba' la kun mkhyen gi ye shes chen pos sprin gis go phye nas bdag gi yi ge a dkar po shes pa rgyu can rgyur gnas pa nam ka la sal gis byung ngo.
- 13 See, for example, ITJ437, f. 7r.1-6.
- 14 For more on the early development of the perfection stage sexual practices in the Dunhuang manuscripts, see Dalton, "The Development of Perfection".
- 15 PT626 f. 2v.6, PT634 f. 1v.1 (mchan 'grel).
- 16 ITJ468, f. 2r.4-5, STMG, ff. 146.6-147.2, PT823, recto f. 1.4 (translated in Gomez, "Direct and Gradual Approaches", 109, 119, 126). In PT626 and PT634, viewing the mind is linked to its non-abiding (mi gnas). This link is a common theme in Northern Chan texts (see Faure, Will to Orthodoxy, 61-3). See also PT116, panel 184.
- 17 Moheyan was based at Dunhuang in the 780s and 790s, with a short interlude teaching at the royal court in Central Tibet at the invitation of the king. He was perhaps the most influential figure within Tibetan Chan, and plays a central role in the accounts of the imperial 'great debate' between Chinese and Indian exponents of Buddhism held at Samye temple in the eighth century.
- 18 PT117, f. 6v.3-4; STMG, f. 165.4-5; Gomez, "Direct and Gradual Approaches", 152 n. 43. In Moheyan's works, non-thought (Ch. bu si 不思) and the others are distinguished from the obstruction or cessation of thoughts; rather, when the thoughts are left alone, they are pacified of themselves (rang zhi).
- 19 Gomez, "Direct and Gradual Approaches", 153; Gomez, "Purifying Gold", 89–90.
- 20 PT634, f. 1r.3 (mchan 'grel).
- 21 Gomez, "Purifying Gold", 92, 102.
- 22 Broughton, "Early Ch'an Schools", 8-9.
- 23 Here the Tibetan Dunhuang manuscripts held in the Stein collection at the British Library are prefixed ITJ (short for IOL Tib J, or "India Office Library Tibetan I").
- 24 A critical edition based on all but ITJ1774 is provided in Okimoto, "Tonko shutsudo".

26 PT823, recto panels 1.4-2.2 (translated in Gomez, "Direct and Gradual Approaches", 126). The description of this practice is based on the influential appropriate Sitterangama Sutra (see Faure, Will to Orthodoxy, 65).

- In "Early Ch'an Schools", 7-9, Broughton argues that Wuxiang's direct disciple Wuzhu was the Chinese teacher who instructed Sba gsal snang. As told in the S/Dba bzhed, he was one of the first people sent by the Tibetan king Mes 'ag tshoms (704-55) to bring Buddhist teachings to Tibet. See Diemberger and Wangdu, Dba bzhed, 46-52. The Chinese locus classicus for the three phrases is the influential Lidai fabao ji.
- 28 On the three phrases, see Yampolsky, The Platform Sutra, 44.
- 29 PT121, panel 411; PT116, panels 165-66.
- 30 PT699, f. 3v.6, ting nge 'dzin tsha cig du bdag gis bsgoms. Here we are reading tshul for tsha.
- 31 Faure, Will to Orthodoxy, 67-69.
- 32 PT699, f. 4r.5 (mchan 'grel).
- 33 PC4646, f. 147r-v (translated in Gomez, "Direct and Gradual Approaches", 153 n. 43).
- 34 Gomez, "Direct and Gradual Approaches", 153; Faber, "A Tibetan Dunhuang Treatise", 67, n. 41. The word tshor also appears in this context in PT116, panels 155–56.
- 35 PT699, f. 41.1, nyan thos zhi ba'i gnyen po.
- 36 ITJ709, f. 4r.3-6, STMG, ff. 165.5-66.1 (translated in Gomez, "Direct and Gradual Approaches", 111, 120).
- 37 PT116, panels 119-70; discussed in Eastman, "Mahāyoga Texts at Tun-huang", 58. Other Chan texts using the terms Mahāyoga (rnal 'byor chen po) and Mahāyogin (rnal 'byor chen po pa) are ITJ710/1, ITJ709/9, ITJ704/1, and (if it can be called a Chan work) ITJ705/PT818. Another version of the last text is discussed in Otokawa, "New Fragments of the Rnal 'byor chen por bsgom pa'i don from Tabo".
- 38 There is yet another discussion of the three jewels, different again, though clearly from the same tradition, found in PT812 verso.
- 39 With regard to lineage, it is worth mentioning the short list that appears in PT699 of people who "left no physical elements" at their death. Only two of the six figures in this list may be easily identified, Lang Dkon mchog 'byung gnas and Gnubs Nam mkha'i snying po. Both are considered by the later Tibetan tradition to have been Mahāyoga practitioners taught by the eighthcentury figure Padmasambhava. Another Dunhuang document, PT996,

discusses a Central Asian Chan lineage which includes a Tshig tsa Nam mkha'i snying po, active during the eighth century. In *The Great Perfection*, 98, Karmay argues that these two figures with the name Nam mkha'i snying po should not be identified; however, PT699 strengthens the case for making such an identification. PT996 associates Nam mkha'i snying po with a Spug ye shes dbyangs, author of a treatise on Chan called *The Meaning of Meditating on Mahâyoga* (PT818). Thus Nam mkha'i snying po may well have played a part in both Mahāyoga and Chan lineages. PT996 has been discussed and reproduced in Lalou, "Document tibétain sur l'expansion du dhyāna chinois".

- 40 ITJ1774, f. 5r.4-5, slob poin in 'bu ta kub ta dang/ shi ri man 'ju dang/ hung ka ra dang/. In the later Tibetan tradition, all three figures are strongly associated with Mahäyoga. The identity of Buddhagupta is discussed in Karmay, The Great Perfection, 61-63.
- 41 PT699, f. 2R.2, lha dang slobs dpon ni zhal ma mthong.
- 42 PT699, f. 2R.2-3.
- 43 PT634, f. 1R.2; PT626, f. 2V.4. The five mūdras are also referred to as "the five entry gates" ('jugs pa'i sgo Inga).
- 44 ITJ468, f. 1R.1-2 (translated in Gomez, "Direct and Gradual Approaches", 108). This passage is very similar to the instruction in the root text, the Brief Precepts.
- 45 Or.8210/S.95, V.5. II.4–8. See also ITJ437, f. 1V.9, where the thusness samādhi is referred to as 'meditating on the nose' (sna la bsgom).
- 46 PT634, f. 2R.1.
- 47 PT699, f. 3V.4-6; PT634, f. 2R.1.
- 48 PT699, f. 4V.1 (mchan 'grel), gyur ba yang a tsam du cha mnyam.
- 49 PT626, f. 5R.1; PT634, f. 2R.3 (mchan 'grel).
- 50 ITJ331/2, f. 2R.5; ITJ437, f. 7R.6; ITJ464, f. 2R.4; Or.8210/S.95 V.3, ll.4-6
- 51 PT699, f. 4v.2 (mchan 'grel, de ltar ci bngon zhe na).
- 52 The canonical edition of this work can be found at P.5082. In addition, two full copies are found in ITJ470 and PT837 and a partial copy in PT819. Dpal dbyangs considered his Zhus lan a Mahäyoga work, as is clear in the opening lines where he explains that he composed the work, 'for the sake of those wishing to understand with awareness the way of the supreme Mahäyoga' (rnal 'byor chen po mchog gi lugs' rig pas shes par 'dod pa'i phyir). The lines cited in PT699 can be found in the answer to the twenty-eighth question.
- 53 Eastman, "Mahāyoga Texts at Tun-huang", 58.
- 54 A singular exception to this is the 'hidden treasure' (gter ma) text, the Bka' thang sde lnga. See Karmay, The Great Perfection, 90-99.
- 55 On Gnubs chen's role in the codification of the Great Perfection, see Van Schaik, "The Early Days of the Great Perfection".

DUNHUANG CHARACTERS AND THE DATING OF MANUSCRIPTS IMRE GALAMBOS

The discovery of the Dunhuang documents in the early part of the twentieth century has been the largest single find of Chinese manuscripts and their content has been the subject of considerable scholarly activity over the past decades. In recent years, however, there has been an increased interest in the manuscripts as physical objects. This new attitude focuses not only on the content but also the material manifestation of that content, including the paper, layout and character forms.

As part of the new approach towards manuscripts, in this paper I will address certain aspects of dating manuscripts on the basis of their character forms. I will demonstrate that the analysis of a limited amount of data can be misleading and only a comprehensive large-scale study will yield reliable results.

The benefits of studying Dunhuang character forms

There are several reasons why it is important to study the Chinese character forms on Dunhuang manuscripts. First of all, it helps us to read the manuscripts. Problems with deciphering individual characters are especially prominent in the case of the so-called transformation texts (bianwen 變文) where the inability to match every character with its modern equivalent has been a major obstacle in understanding the meaning of the text. But often a match by itself is not enough because the character is a phonetic loan or a graphic variant of another character. In this case the researcher

needs to determine which *word* the scribe intended to record with the graph in question. Therefore, the character forms can help us get closer to the original meaning of the text.

Learning about character forms in the Dunhuang manuscripts also helps us to reach a better understanding of the evolution of Chinese writing. The Dunhuang manuscripts are not an isolated corpus of documents in a script that was used in Dunhuang alone but an integral part of the written output of Chinese civilization in general. Therefore, the character forms found here are closely connected with those before and after them in time. The more manuscripts we find the clearer this connection is. In addition, because of their wide range in time, the Dunhuang manuscripts can tell us about the processes that governed the evolution of the Chinese script during the six hundred years between AD 400–1000.

The character forms also help to date the manuscripts. Although most scholars would not dispute the general notion of being able to determine the date of a manuscript based on its calligraphy or peculiar character forms, surprisingly little work has been done in this field to date. This principle depends on the belief that each time period had its own distinguishing character forms. As characters and writing habits evolved, sometimes spontaneously, sometimes as a result of administrative actions, the various stages of their development were recorded in the manuscripts.

Therefore, if one was able to work out the characteristics of each time period, one could match other manuscripts against those.

The time range of the Dunhuang material - based on the earliest and latest dated documents – is hypothesized to be between 400-1000, leaving us with a period of 600 years which is far too imprecise as a manuscript date. We need greater accuracy. There are several methods one can employ in order to determine the age of a manuscript on the basis of its writing. The most obvious method is using the date, if there is such, on the manuscript itself. Fortunately, a small portion of the manuscripts includes a colophon and a date, thus providing valuable material for the comparison of other manuscripts.1 For example, manuscript Or.8210/S.81 contains a copy of the Mahāparanirvāṇa-sūtra (T.374) with a colophon (Fig. 1). The colophon says that the Buddhist disciple Qiao Liangyong 譙良顯 copied the sutra on the twenty-fifth day of the seventh month of the fifth year of the Tianjian reign period (29 August, 506).² Thus the character forms and calligraphy of the text can be ascribed to the beginning of the sixth century.

The other method of dating is based on locating character forms that are known from history to be particular to certain eras. This method essentially consists of detecting instances of name taboos and so-called Empress Wu characters. Name taboos refer to character changes, complete or partial, effected in order to avoid using the names of emperors or other respected personages - use

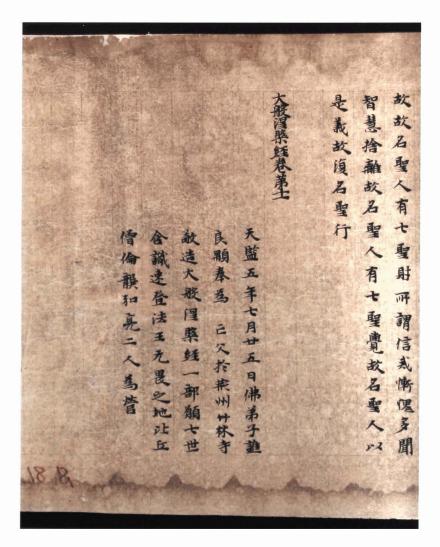


Fig. 1 Colophon to the Mahaparanirvana-sutra. The colophon to this Dunhuang manuscript dates it to 506, making it one of the earliest dated scrolls from cave 17 at Dunhuang and a useful model for early sixth- century character forms and calligraphy. The British Library, Or.8210/S.81 (detail)

'Empress Wu characters'

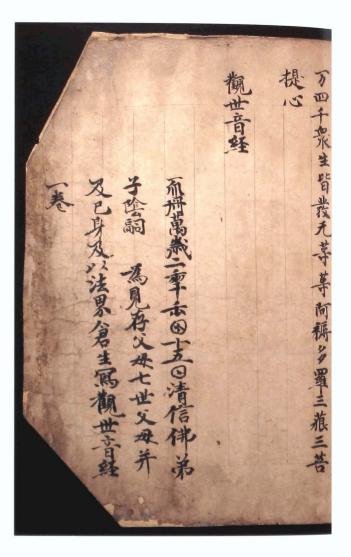
The term 'Empress Wu characters' refers to the characters introduced by Empress Wu Zetian in her reign (690–705), during which she declared a new dynastic name, the Zhou. Out of ritual and spiritual considerations she changed over a dozen characters at the beginning of her reign. The Xin Tangshu⁴ recorded that she changed twelve characters, namely, 照, 天, 地, 日, 月, 星, 君, 臣, 人, 載, 年, 正. Hu Sanxing's 胡三省 (1230–87) commentary to the Zizhi tongjian⁵ added a further two, 證, 聖.⁶ In reality, however, the empress probably changed more than these fourteen characters. After the restoration of the Tang dynasty at the end of her reign, the new characters were changed back to their original forms. Therefore, the presence of Empress Wu characters indicates that the text was written during the reign of Empress Wu, i.e. 690–705. Because of this distinctiveness, the easiest Tang manuscripts to identify are those written during this period.

Sometimes, however, the Empress Wu characters are used not as consistently as one would expect. Manuscript Or.8210/S.217, which is a fragment of the 'Guanshiyinjing' (i.e. Saddharmapundarīka-sūtra, chapter 25), has the following colophon (Fig. 2):

On the fifteenth day of the first month of *Tiancewansui* 2 [23 Feb. 696] the Buddhist disciple of pure faith Yin Si copied out the Guanshiyinjing in one roll on behalf of his parents now living and his parents of seven previous incarnations, as well as on his own behalf and that of the multitude of living beings in the universe.⁸

天冊萬歲二年正月十五日清信 弟子陰嗣為見存父母七世父母 并及己身及以法界倉生寫觀世 音經一卷

The colophon records a precise date which falls within the reign period of Empress Wu. In his catalogue, Giles also notes that 'the text contains Empress Wu characters for 'tian', 'nian', 'zheng', 'yue' and 'ri'." Indeed, these characters are clearly discernible in the



Figs 2 and 3 Guanshiyinjing.

Guanshiyinjing, or chapter 25 of the Saddharmapunḍarika-sūtra (Lotus sutra) became very popular in Dunhuang as it described how, by calling on the name of the bodhisattava Avalokiteśvara (Ch: Guanshiyin), travellers besieged by bandits or others in trouble would be saved.

The colophon (above) dates this manuscript to 696 during the reign of the Chinese Empress Wu Zetian. Various character forms were proscribed during her reign and common alternatives used, as seen in the colophon. However, the alternative forms are not found in the main body of the text (right) suggesting either that the text and colophon were written at different times or, more probably, that the rules were not always enforced.

The British Library, Or.8210/S.217 (details)

請國五度脫衆生是故汝等應當心供養觀世音 女月而為說法應以天龍夜又見間婆何情羅迎樓羅 緊那罪摩睢羅伽人非人等身得度者即皆現之石 女身而為就法應以童男童女身得度省即現童男童 軍門身而為說法應以此正比丘尺優邊塞優遊燕身 无畏是故此強婆世界皆号之為施无畏者无盡意苦 若薩是制世奇若薩摩河薩於休畏急難之中能花 无盡意是觀世音菩薩成就如是切德以種種形遊 為說法應以執金剛神得度者即現金剛神石為說法 得度看即現以丘比丘尼優婆塞優婆表身而為說法 產自佛言世真我今當供養觀世音菩薩即解頭根 應侵者居士軍官婆羅門婦女身得度者即現婦

colophon. However, a closer look at the text of the sutra reveals that there are standard forms for characters which should have been changed to Empress Wu characters (Fig. 3). If we arrange the Empress Wu characters that occur within this manuscript in a table format, we can see that there is a distinct difference between the uses of the forms of these characters in the colophon and the text of the sutra itself.

The above finding leaves us with two different possibilities. First, perhaps the sutra and the colophon were written at different times. Although the calligraphy on the text of the sutra and the colophon seems similar, the ruling on the last sheet of paper containing the colophon noticeably differs from that on the rest of the scroll. The lines on the last sheet are nearly 2 cm shorter than on the rest of the manuscript. The writing, on the other hand, preserves the original height of the lines, thus protruding beyond the boundaries of the ruled margin. The colophon uses a slightly larger script and mostly disregards the ruled lines. However, even if this last sheet of paper was attached to the manuscript subsequently, which

No.	Modern form	Form in main text	Form in colophon
1.	照	照	
2.	天	天	和
3.	地	地	
4.	Ħ	В	<u> </u>
5.	月	-	(b)
6.	人	人	-
7.	年	-	軍
8.	īE	-	本
9.	聖	聖	-
10.	國	國	

Table 1. Empress Wu characters in Or.8210/S.217

might not be the case at all, the character 人 occurs on this last page at the end of the sutra in its standard form. Thus we are still left with the problem of having standard and Empress Wu characters side by side on the same sheet of paper.

The second possible explanation for the co-existence of different types of character forms is that either the practice of using the Empress Wu characters was erratic or the rule was not enforced efficiently. Perhaps there were exceptions to the rule, such as the option of maintaining the original character forms of an earlier document when making a new copy. Manuscript Or.8210/S.238, dated 692 by the colophon, supports this assumption, showing a similar binary distinction between the use of Empress Wu characters in the colophon and the lack of those within the main text. Once again, both the colophon and the main body of the text are consistent in using their respective character forms.

The analysis of Empress Wu characters on brick inscriptions from Turfan reveals an even greater inconsistency. Out of the eleven brick inscriptions analysed by Hou Can in his study, ten use the character \mathcal{P}_1 , always in its standard form. However, the Xin Tangshu and Hu Sanxing listed this character as having been altered by the empress. Another inconsistency among the inscriptions is that the character \mathcal{P}_1 is used in two different forms. Although Hou has originally detected a pattern in using one form of the character \mathcal{P}_1 from 689 to 690 and then switching to another form, he had to modify his hypothesis after he discovered another brick inscription in which the second form was used already as early as 694.

The inconsistency of the use of Empress Wu characters in manuscripts and inscriptions constitutes a problem for the precise dating of documents. It is very likely that these inconsistencies are simply due to lack of knowledge on our part and will be effectively solved upon examining a much larger pool of manuscripts.

The Ganlu zishu

Among the extant traditional dictionaries, perhaps the most important one for the study of Dunhuang manuscripts is the Ganlu zishu 干珠字書 by Yan Yuansun 蔥元孫 (d. 714) of the Tang dynasty. He was the grandson of Yan Shigu 蔥師古 (581-645), the famous scholar who wrote the commentary to the Hanshu. In the Ganlu zishu, Yan Yuansun categorized the characters of his time into three major groups: su 俗 'popular', tong 通 'common', and zheng 記 'standard'. In this regard, his attitude towards writing was that of a descriptive linguist. He did not try to enforce a standard by saying that people should write a character a certain way and avoid writing it in any other way. Instead, he believed that the various forms of the characters could all be used in the appropriate situation. He explained in his preface that each of his three categories

had different uses: su characters were used in tax records, archives, contracts and medical prescriptions where sophisticated language was not necessary; tong characters were used in submitted proposals, letters and court verdicts; zheng characters were used for writing essays at examinations or producing documents to be carved onto steles.12

This description is important because it tells us that at the time of Yan Yuansun, character forms that did not fall within the official standard were not only in common use but were an accepted part of the writing system. Moreover, the description also reveals that, in terms of the general rate of literacy, only a very small circle of people at the time was using standard characters, whereas the majority of the population was using other forms in its daily routine. Without trying to eliminate alternate character forms, people were accustomed to writing with different degrees of sophistication in different areas of their lives.

The differentiation between domains of use also tells us why later generations, including ours, saw a skewed picture of the writing habits of the Tang, even if looking at first-hand epigraphical evidence. The reason is that people wrote those documents which were important enough to be transmitted in standard forms. At the same time, documents written in non-standard forms did not live beyond the generation that had created them. Thus this highly selective process of textual transmission had been continuously weeding out documents created in non-standard forms. Consequently, the decisions of a relatively small scholarly and political circle have shaped the way we perceive the writing habits of the past.

Document Or.8210/S.6203 describes the merits for a person for rebuilding the Mogao caves. The inscription is dated to the eleventh year of Dali (776), which is very close to the time when the famous calligrapher Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿 (709-85), who was also Yan Yuansun's nephew, copied the Ganlu zishu and gave it its current shape (the ninth year of Dali, i.e. 774). 13 Thus Or.8210/S.6203 is a document written about the same time as the extant form of the Ganlu zishu, making the manuscript an important witness of the time period and environment in which the dictionary was shaped (Fig. 4). Comparing these two sources to each other would shed light on the reliability of the dictionary in terms of dating manuscripts. Table 2 (left) shows a selection of character forms from Or.8210/S.6203 in comparison with the Ganlu zishu classification. Column 1 shows the standard modern form for each character; column 2 its form in which it occurs in the manuscript; and columns 3-5 mark the category under which the Ganlu zishu classifies the form in column 2.

Table 2 shows that eleven characters – 足, 明, 取, 於, 蒙, 景, 虚, 龍能, 或, 光 and 師 - in the text that appear in the Ganlu zishu fall into the category of tong, i.e. commonly used, characters. A smaller group of six characters (當, 操, 坐, 節, 流, 況) are classified by Yan Yuansun as su, i.e. popular. There are also two characters (圖, 御) that appear in their standard form, despite the fact that the dictionary also contains common or popular forms for them. Moreover, three of the characters (照 就 因) appear in the manuscript in non-standard forms that are not listed in the dictionary, showing that there were other forms in use at the time



Fig. 4 Document describing the merit of a donor to the Dunhuang caves.

This manuscript was written in Dunhuang in 776 about the same time as a dictionary was completed in China - the Ganlu zishu - which categorized the character forms of the time into three groups: popular, common and standard. This document contains character forms from all these

The British Library, Or.8210/S.6203 (detail)

Modern	Form in S.6203			,
form	Form in 5.0203	su 俗	tong	zheng H
足	12.	111	<u>∭</u>	11:.
	之		V	
當		1		
操	将	√		
坐	唑	7		
明	明	-	1	
取	取		V	
於	15	_	1	
蒙	家		1	
景	景		1	
虚	虚		1	
龍	能		1	
能	飥		1	
圖				1
就	就			
或	英		1	
節		1		
光	艽		V	
師	師		1	
御	FEY			1
流	派	V		
況	沢	√		
照	昭			
因	目			

Table 2. Comparison of character forms in Or.8210/S.6203 with the Ganlu zishu categories. 14

The above comparison of character forms tells us that neither was the threefold classification of the Ganlu zishu absolute nor was the dictionary comprehensive. Finding a character form on a small fragment that appears in the dictionary under one of the three categories would not be sufficient to draw any definite conclusions about the fragment itself. One could never be certain how a larger fragment from the same manuscript would modify the initial assessment. Therefore, the Ganlu zishu should only be used as one of several tools to decipher, read and, ultimately, date eighth-century manuscripts. It should not be applied as a definite benchmark because the actual state of affairs with respect to Tang writing was much more complex and variable. In fact, the dictionary's primary value lies in showing us that the character forms in the Tang were variable and that at the time this variability was an accepted phenomenon within society.

The written dialect

In order to be able to date manuscripts based on their character forms, one must be able to identify those forms which are unique to a particular time period. During the process of identifying such unique features among various character forms, one must be aware of the inherent variability of character forms at any given time in Chinese history. If one looks at a larger amount of material, it becomes apparent that character forms could differ significantly even within the same text, not to speak of an entire time period. For example, manuscript Or.8210/S.227 (dated to 593 by the colophon) writes the character 因 as 国 and 回; the character 尼 as 足 and 足; and the character 於 as き and だ Manuscript Or.8210/S.81 writes the character 止 as 🛥 and 止; the character 🖞 as 🎁 and 驢. These examples reveal that the differences in character structure were not necessarily the result of temporal or geographical differences. One cannot determine the date of the document simply by observing whether a certain character form appears in it or not. Although the existence or absence of particular character forms is undoubtedly an important factor in dating the documents, in practice the actual pattern is much more complicated than can be seen from a few characters written on a few manuscripts. The analysis of a larger selection of data would almost inevitably force us to modify our findings.

Generally speaking, I see the issue of dating a manuscript on the basis of its character forms as the task of identifying a written dialect. I use the word 'dialect' here not as a distinction from a standard but as one of the many different entities with unique characteristics; in this sense, the so-called 'standard' is merely one of the many dialects. A dialect is a linguistic product of a community defined in both spatial and temporal terms. ¹⁵ Such a community would be a group of people who lived in approximately the same area at approximately the same time.

In terms of their connection to each other, written dialects are similar to spoken ones. The individuals within the same dialect all speak slightly differently, depending on their age, gender, educa-

tion, mood, health, etc.; yet they all understand each other and share certain common characteristics which together distinguish their dialect from all the other ones. For those not familiar with a dialect some of the distinctions might be too subtle to notice, but for those who know the dialect well they are obvious. Therefore, despite the idiosyncrasies of the individuals there are common traits within the entire group. The task for the researcher is to detect the boundaries of this dialect, that is, determine those collective peculiarities that set the dialect apart from other dialects and yet are commonly shared by all of its speakers. At the same time, the researcher should allow a certain degree of flexibility and disregard, just as all members of a dialect do, the idiosyncrasies that pertain to individuals.

The same capability of distinguishing individual dialects from each other holds true for written dialects within the Dunhuang corpus. There are peculiarities the researcher needs to take into account and others he needs to disregard. The important task is to differentiate between those particular to a scribe and those shared by other members of the community, but not members of other communities. Dating a document is essentially identifying the written dialect of a manuscript. 16 The most important factor in defining a written dialect is a statistically sufficient amount of material. A written dialect is the sum total of the characteristics of the writing habits of people from the same general period and location. It is a concept that is only meaningful for a group of manuscripts, not individual documents. There is no ideal or perfect specimen that would embody the characteristics of a written dialect. Therefore, when studying manuscripts, one needs as many witnesses as possible in order to be able to reach reliable conclusions. Individual character forms by themselves are only examples of possible configurations. Just as in spoken language where the dialect can only be studied on the basis of the innumerable utterances of a large number of native speakers, an analysis of the written dialect must involve a large number of texts written by various scribes. The larger the pool of examined documents is, the more accurate the results are. The examples given in this paper were all examples of how the analysis of singular instances of unique character forms can be imprecise.

In summary, up until now the fundamental problem with dating manuscripts on the basis of character forms is the limited nature of the material examined. The above examples of inconsistencies in using the Empress Wu characters and the Ganlu zishu categories demonstrate the inherent uncertainties in this task. Any study that is based on but a few examples of individual character forms will inevitably be inaccurate and subject to revisions upon the examination of a larger pool of data. Only a comprehensive study of Dunhuang materials will allow us to identify the various written dialects and subdialects that comprised the writing habits shared by, and peculiar to, certain communities.

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NOTES

- 1 It must be noted, however, that a date written on a manuscript does not necessarily mean that a given text on that manuscript was written at that time. For example, the verso of Or.8210/S.3711 has a Buddhist biography with the date of 743. The date, however, was clearly written on a separate sheet of paper and it is up to discussion whether it represented the actual time when a Tang scribe copied the text onto this manuscript.
- 2 Giles, Catalogue, no.1725
- 3 Huang, Dunhuang yuyan, 49-50.
- 4 Xin Tangshu, 76.
- 5 Zizhi tongjian, 204.
- The new characters were mostly semantic combinations of existing characters. For example, the character 地 'earth', was to be written as 埊, combined from the characters 山 'mountain', 木 'water', and 土 'soil'. The character 照 was to be written as 戛, combined from the characters 明 'bright' and 空 'emptiness'. Such semantic combinations were not new at the time, quite a few of character forms based on the same principle were listed in the character dictionary from Dunhuang called Zhengming yaolu 正名要錄 (S.388): the character 罷 'to discard' as a combination of the characters 下用 'not needed', the character 幅 'woman' as a combination of the characters 女人 'female person', etc.
- 7 Hou Can identifies a total of 18 Empress Wu characters. See Hou, "Tulufan chutu zhuanzhi suojian", 119–24.
- 8 Giles, Catalogue, no.3182 and IDP database, http://idp.bl.uk/GetObjectOverview/217.
- 9 Ibid.

- 10 Hou, "Tulufan chutu zhuanzhi suojian", 124.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Yan, Ganlu zishu, 3.
- 13 I am grateful to Professor Ishizuka Harumichi for pointing out to me that although Yan Yuansun finished the dictionary around 710–20, its final version was completed only in 774.
- 14 This table only includes characters that have at least two different forms in terms of the su-tong-zheng categories. Characters such as 禮 and 萬 that appear in the Ganlu zishu with two zheng but no su or tong forms are omitted.
- Besides time and space, an additional dimension of a written dialect is that of social usage or occasion. As it is also witnessed by the 'Preface' to the Ganlu zishu, different social situations required a different degree of orthographic integrity. Thus in reality a person writing for different occasions would temporarily employ two different written dialects.
- 16 An interesting issue in this aspect is the detection of forgeries. A written dialect, just like a spoken one, can be imitated by outsiders. Most of the time, speakers of the dialect would be able to discern the slight nuances in the pronunciation of the imitator. Occasionally, however, an imitator can be so skilled that even native speakers of a dialect cannot tell him apart. In the same way, although with sufficient amount of background knowledge one would be able to detect most manuscript forgeries, the possibility that a few remain unspotted will always be present.

STAR CHARTS ON THE SILK ROAD:

ASTRONOMICAL STAR MAPS
IN ANCIENT CHINA

JEAN-MARC BONNET-BIDAUD AND FRANCOISE PRADERIE

A stronomy – with medicine – is probably the oldest human science. From the beginning of human life, men and women were confronted daily with the enigmatic view of the sky and they examined the stars to provide some answer to the meaning of their existence. This is certainly true today, when the most sophisticated instruments such as space telescopes peer into the universe, but it was even more true thousands of years ago. At that time astronomy was highly valued and critical knowledge. For the peasants, an ignorance of the basic laws of astronomy which determined the regularity of the seasons meant death: failing to match the planting of the seeds to the natural cycle of the seasons would inevitably result in famine and desolation. In the same way, for travellers on land or at sea, the inability to recognize the basic pattern of the stars caused shipwrecks and wanderings and also led to loss of life.

Astronomical knowledge was therefore always vital information. It is not surprising to find astronomical documents among the thousands of manuscripts uncovered in the Library Cave of Dunhuang on the Silk Road. The real surprise is however to find there one of the most valuable treasures of astronomy, the world's earliest manuscript map of the stars known today from any civilization. This spectacular document, entitled 'Treatise on heavenly bodies and meteors' and registered under the number Or.8210/S.3326 in the Stein Collection of the British Library (cat. 161), is an exquisite and complete representation of the Chinese sky. Together

with two other major documents – a fragment of a circumpolar map and an astrological compilation of the Chinese constellations – also found in Dunhuang, it also provides a fascinating view of astronomical knowledge in ancient China.

Ancient Chinese astronomy: a pure political science

While in most other parts of the world, particularly in the Mediterranean region, the Heaven was the domain of gods and divinities dominating the world of human beings, the sky in China was always understood as part of the human world - to paraphrase a famous Mao Zedong sentence (taken from classical sources), 'the sky is the other half of the Earth' - and there was the unique preoccupation that sky and earth should be always kept in perfect harmony. In the Chinese tradition, as early as the first texts available (dating from before the fifth century BC), the sky was indeed a pure mirror of the human world. Each part of the sky was subdivided to correspond to the different regions of the terrestrial empire and omens were carefully examined to decide if celestial events were in agreement with terrestrial matters. In this sense, ancient Chinese astronomy can be considered a pure political science. It was a means of ruling the state and the emperors of successive Chinese dynasties maintained armies of astronomers to detect, examine and interpret all celestial changes. No state action could be undertaken without questioning the omens. Ancient scientists, both

astronomers and astrologers, had the same importance as diplomatic and military counsellors today. The heavy duty and the strategic importance of their task is illustrated by the precept stated in an apocryphal chapter of the 'Classic of History' (Shujing), dating from at least the second century BC, where the sad story of the two astronomers Xi and He failing to predict an eclipse is related:

Hsi [Xi] and Ho [He] ... stupidly went astray (from their duties) in the matter of the heavenly appearances and rendered themselves liable to death appointed by the former kings. The statutes of government say, 'When they anticipate the time, let them be put to death without mercy; when (their reckoning) is behind time, let them be put to death without mercy. 1

This was sometimes the price paid by ancient astronomers.

Over the centuries this constant celestial preoccupation within the relatively stable structure of the Chinese empire contributed to build an original science with no counterpart in the rest of the world. This pragmatic attitude led to important discoveries as demonstrated by the reference work of Needham.² Not only eclipses but comets, sunspots, novae and supernovae were first discovered and fully documented by the ancient Chinese astronomers, in fact so precisely that their ancient texts are sometimes used nowadays, in modern astronomy, to constrain and understand better the nature of these different phenomena.

Chinese astronomical science was based on a methodical and precise description of the sky, an essential condition for the precise positioning of unexpected phenomena.

The Chinese sky

The Chinese sky is intimately linked to the symbolism of the Middle Kingdom and has nothing in common with the West European description of Greek origin. It is divided into five great regions or palaces (Wu Gong 五宮), corresponding traditionally to the five Chinese cardinal points, East, North, West, South and Middle. The fifth cardinal point, Middle, is the most important one and corresponds to the circumpolar region which harbours the celestial image of the emperor, Tian Zi 天子, symbolized by the pole star, and surrounded by the different dignitaries of the court. Encircling them, the imperial palace (now called 'the Forbidden City' and also designated as the Purple Enclosure Zi Wei 紫微) is also marked by stars, including the surrounding external walls. This part of the sky, spangled with constellations such as 'the prince', 'the concubine' or 'the throne', is a lively illustration of the celestial mirror of the earth life. In the rest of the sky, the four other palaces group the equatorial constellations into the four usual geographical directions, also associated with an animal and a colour: East being the Blue Dragon, North, the Black Turtle, West, the White Tiger, South, the Red Bird.

The most important Chinese constellations are distributed in

these four palaces, very approximately along the celestial equator. These are the twenty-eight xiu (ii) - translated as 'mansions' or 'lunar lodges'. Their origin is still an enigma and their relation to the moon is not documented. However, these constellations are constantly used throughout Chinese history as precise markers of the positions of heavenly bodies during the seasons. They are sometimes considered as an equatorial Chinese zodiac.

The grouping of the stars in China is also totally different from the Greek tradition. Instead of a relatively small number of large constellations based on mythological figures (forty-nine constellations are listed by the Greek astronomer Ptolemy (AD 150) and only eighty-eight are used today in modern astronomy for the whole sky), the stars in the Chinese tradition are associated in numerous asterisms (nearly 300), sometimes involving only one star, most of them referring to practical objects or persons. This very fine and detailed carving up of the sky was probably dictated by the need to provide accurate positions when precise coordinates were not available. The small size of most asterisms enables an event to be located with relative accuracy when only the name of the asterism is given. In the celestial rotation of the sky, these numerous celestial 'landmarks' were then also an appropriate measure of time and position.

The earliest catalogues

Lists of the Chinese constellations were maintained all through Chinese history and did not change much over time. The great divisions of the Chinese sky are transmitted to us by numerous ancient texts preceding the Dunhuang epoch. Unfortunately, many of the most precious texts were lost during the infamous 'burning of the books', ordered in 213 BC by the first Chinese emperor, Qin Shihuangdi. Happily, the Han-dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) historian, Sima Qian 司馬遷 (?145-86 BC), who tried to collect the missing information following this event, was also an astronomer. His Historical Records (Shiji), 3 considered the first historical encyclopaedic work in China, included a chapter entitled 'Book of Celestial Officials ('Tian Guan Shu' 天官書) devoted in its first part to a complete description of the Five Palaces. The text gives a detailed enumeration of the names of the different asterisms and stars with their relative locations in the sky, but with no mention of their relative brightness.

At the end of this fundamental work, dated 91 BC, one also finds the origin of the Chinese uranography as told by Sima Qian. According to him, the nomenclature and the first catalogues were created by different astronomers before and during the Warring States period (476-221 BC). Among them, the most important were Shi Shen 石申 of the state of Wei 魏, Gan De 甘德 of the state of Qi 齊 and Wu Xian 巫咸,4 the last being of uncertain origin and date. These three ancient astronomers produced reference books describing heaven, the movement of the sun, moon and planets and the repartition of the stars with the different astrological predictions associated with them.5

None of these original texts has survived but numerous other ancient texts, such as the Huainanzi, a philosophical treatise presented to the emperor in 139 BC, independently corroborates the information contained in the Shiji. Though Sima Qian himself does not differentiate information from the three schools of astronomers, three distinct catalogues were maintained through the Han period and later combined by the astronomer Chen Zhuo 陳卓 (220-80). The tradition of attributing each asterism to a different school survived because of the demands of astrological prediction. The Chen Zhuo catalogue is lost but it is said to have contained a total of 1,464 stars separated into 284 constellations. The most complete and detailed description of the Chinese sky, including positions, given by coordinates in degrees, is later found in the Astrological Treatise of the Kaiyuan Period (Kaiyuan Zhanjing), a compilation attributed to the astronomer Qutan Xida 型曼悉達 in 729. Part of this information is also present in the astronomical chapters of the History of the Jin (Jinshu) and of the Sui (Suishu), both probably written by Li Chunfeng 李淳風 (602-70).6

The long tradition in China of searching the sky for celestial omens had therefore led to an early and unsurpassed precision in star catalogues. The first lists of stars were obviously available in China at least two centuries before the first Greek catalogue of Hipparchus (134 BC) and were continuously improved throughout the western Middle Ages. The precise location of each star with respect to the others in later catalogues evidently enabled the Chinese to make a star chart relatively early in their history. In fact, Chen Zhuo is said to have produced such a map⁷ but no example dating from this period is extant. The Dunhuang manuscript Or.8210/S.3326 is therefore the earliest known star chart.

The Dunhuang charts

The discovery of a star chart among the Dunhuang manuscripts came as a surprise since a chart from such an early period had never been found previously in any civilization. The exceptional document is registered as Or.8210/S.3326 (S. for Stein), from the name of its discoverer, Aurel Stein, who first saw it in 1907 and selected it from among the manuscripts that were brought back by him to the British Museum, probably for its very spectacular aesthetic appearance. To our knowledge, the first mention of this chart in an astronomical context was made by Needham in 1959, in his book Science and Civilisation in China. Surprisingly, since that time, it has been rather neglected. Though it has been used as an illustration in many works, only very few publications have been devoted to it, all being in Chinese. On An extensive interpretation and scientific evaluation is in progress by the authors of this essay.

A complete view of the sky

The chart itself is 210 cm long by 24.4 cm wide and comprises the end part of the Or.8210/S.3326 scroll. The scroll is in good condition, except for small missing sections at the beginning and end. It

is made of thin fine paper. It was completely lined with a thick paper after renovation work at the British Museum in the 1920s.

The first part of the document is a collection of predictions concerning the shape of the clouds and vapours and is composed of twenty-five drawings associated with sixty-two complete columns of explanatory text. The star chart itself continues from this and is composed of thirteen separate panels. The first twelve correspond to the complete coverage of the sky by zones centred on the equator extending on about 30 degrees in the west–east direction. The panels cover a zone of +40° to -40° in declination. Each vertical panel comes with its explanatory text in one or two columns to the left. The thirteenth and last panel is a circular chart of the North Pole region without accompanying text. The scroll ends with the drawing of an archer shooting an arrow.

The first impressive feature of this document is its comprehensiveness. Altogether, 1,345 stars are present on the maps, grouped in 257 asterisms. The stars are represented by different dots of similar sizes, either black or white circled black with some dots coloured in light red. The asterisms are materialized by black lines joining the dots and different annotations on the maps give the names of the main asterisms. This makes easy the comparison with other catalogues and we were able to identify all asterisms except a very few (fifteen),11 with the available nomenclature derived from ancient catalogues. 12 In concrete terms, the Dunhuang map is the first known graphical representation of these different Chinese lists of stars whose antiquity and completeness have sometimes been questioned. The symbols used for the stars can be divided into three different groups, black, white and red and this is the first representation of the 'Three Schools' astronomical tradition of Shi Shen Shi, Gan De Shi and Wu Xian Shi as discussed above. Traditionally Gan De is associated with black, Shi Shen with red and Wu Xian with white and later yellow in the Tang dynasty (618-907).13 The Or.8210/S.3326 chart mostly conforms to the tradition for Gan De but there are many inversions for the two other catalogues. We do not know the exact reason for this but it may mean that the latter catalogues were already beginning to merge.

All the classical twenty-eight Chinese xiu can be recognized on the Dunhuang maps, together with their leading stars, except for one xiu which is displayed only with its name (wei 胃 or belly). Also visible are the three main 'enclosures' or 'wall-systems' of stars, called yuan 垣 which look like city walls encircling areas of stars. There are no coordinates on these maps nor graphic representation of the equator or of the ecliptic but they are clearly hour-angle maps, with the northern celestial hemisphere in the upper half and the southern in the lower half of each panel. The maps do not overlap in general, except for one asterism (shao wei 少微) which shows up on two successive maps.

Figs. 1a, 2 and 3 show representative parts of the complete star map with the panels corresponding to the fourth (Orion constellation) and eighth lunar month (Bootes constellation) and the circumpolar section.





Fig. 1a Chart of the fourth month (region of Orion) from Or.8210/S.3326.

The British Library, Or.8210/S.3326 (detail)

North is up, East is left and West is right. The map extends in declination from about 40° to – 40°. The map displays inter alia Shen and Shenqi (Orion) in the centre of the figure, with Betelgeuse (α Orionis) and Rigel (β Orionis). Asterisms Wuche and Sanzhu (Auriga or the Charioteer) are in the upper part, including the bright star Capella (α Aurigae). The star Yeji (β Canis Majoris) is located too far north on the Dunhuang map, in the middle of a circle of red stars on the left.

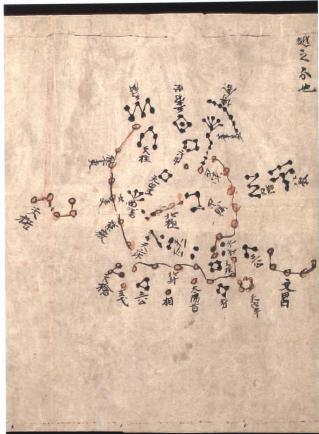
Fig. 1b A modern map computed for the date of 652 and plotted in a Mercator projection.

Courtesy of O. Hodasava

An accurate scientific document

The respective positions of the stars are in general quite accurate for a document drawn by hand. The whole document is exceptionally well preserved and it is clear that the author has taken a great deal of care in drawing the asterisms and the texts. Only one or two blots are visible and very few characters are badly formed. The relative positions of the asterisms are also quite correct with only a few errors. Most are identified with their Chinese name written on the map, which consolidates our identification in modern terminology. A complete evaluation by an exact comparison with modern positions is presently being undertaken but the relative accuracy is impressive, given the general abilities at this period. The overall quality of the document clearly demonstrates a mature technique so the chart was most probably produced as a copy of an earlier existing document. The absence of a visible grid, necessary to position the stars correctly, seems to confirm the hypothesis of a copy.





The document could have been derived from an original chart produced by the astronomer Chen Zhuo but also alternatively by Qian Lezhi 錢樂之 (fl. 435), who is known from some ancient texts to have produced a map with 1,464 stars and 284 constellations,14 numbers close to those of the Or.8210/S.3326 manuscript.

One may ask why the first star chart seems to appear so late after the catalogues. The main difficulty of translating a catalogue into a chart is in fact the choice of a projection method which converts a sphere into a plane, reducing the three dimensions into two. A freehand drawing based on a direct vision will be highly distorted since the eyes see only a limited portion of the sky at a time. The only way is to use a systematic method to reproduce the relative positions of the whole sky. An analysis is underway to define the projection method used in Or.8210/S.3326 but it appears to be very close to a Mercator-style projection in which the sphere is projected onto a cylinder, as demonstrated by a comparison with a modern

Fig. 2 Chart of the eighth month (region of Bootes) from Or.8210/S.3326

North is up, East is left and West is right. The chart displays inter alia the asterism Jiao with Spica (\alpha Virginis) as the southern star in the group, and in the upper part, but grouped in a way which is totally unfamiliar to modern eyes, asterisms which altogether form the constellation Bootes with Dajiao (Arcturus, α Bootis) as the brightest star.

The British Library, Or.8210/S.3326 (detail)

Fig. 3 North circumpolar region map from Or.8210/S.3326.

This map is specially rich in stars. The polar star which symbolizes the celestial emperor is not drawn, as is the general case. The Ziwei yuan (Celestial Purple Palace) is the imperial palace displayed by two chains of red-drawn stars on the left and right of the chart and encloses the most northern stars. Beidou (the Northern Dipper or in modern terms the Great Bear) is easily seen at the bottom part of the chart (in red also). The not completely closed square of black stars near the centre is the asterism Sifu 四輔, four stars surrounding the North Pole. The British Library, Or.8210/S.3326 (detail)

reconstruction (Fig. 1b). In this way, the general proportions are kept exact along the equator at the expense of large distortions near the pole. For this reason, the polar region is drawn separately. The composition of the Or.8210/S.3326 chart and its presentation are in fact extremely modern. They are similar in all points to our most modern geographical maps of the earth.

An astronomical almanac

The texts accompanying the charts contribute important complementary information. They give in a concise way the relation of each part of the static sky with the motion of the sun through the different epochs of the year. On the chart itself, annotations are written on all panels (except for three of them for which the notes are missing) to indicate the lunar month, the position of the sun and the culminating constellations at dusk and dawn, with respect to the different mansions (see Figs. 1 and 2).

Each panel text is repetitive and typically uses the same terms as the following example:

四月日會畢嘴昏翌中貝女中

The fourth (lunar) month, the Sun meets the mansions 'Bi' and 'Zui', at dusk the mansion 'Yi' culminates, at dawn the mansion 'Nü' culminates. (see Fig. 1a bottom middle).

Curiously, the information quoted here is extremely similar in style and content to the notations given in a much earlier astronomical text, the *Monthly Ordinances* (Yue Ling), dated approximately 300 BC. This is a direct indication that the charts are based on traditional texts and that they are possibly a reproduction of a much earlier version.

An explanatory text in columns associated with each of the first twelve panels of the chart describes with great accuracy the twelve divisions of the Chinese year and the attendant symbolism. A full explanation of Chinese calendrical science is beyond the scope of this essay but, in brief, the Chinese calendar is lunar-solar, with the months measured by the Moon and the year by the Sun. As in such a calendar, one year (365.25 days) contains slightly more than twelve lunar months (~29.5 days), an intercalary month is added every few years to keep the stability. To eliminate these variations, the Chinese tradition has defined a fixed division of the year in twelve parts which are called 'terrestrial branches' dizhi 地尘 and are also related to the twelve 'stations' ci 次 of the planet Jupiter (according to its nearly twelve-year sidereal period). The text on the charts gives a full account on these correspondences for each month. For the eighth month, one reads (Fig. 2):

自較十二度於展, 壽星。三月之時, 万物始建於地, 春氣布養, 各盡其性, 物不羅夫, 故口壽星。鄭之分也。 From degree twelve of xiu 'Zhen' one is at 'Chen' (a terrestrial branch). This is 'Shouxing' (a Jupiter station). At the third (lunar) month, the ten thousand living beings settle on Earth, the spring breaths spread and feed them... This is why it is called 'Shouxing', the long life star. This is the part (of the country) of 'Zheng'.

The chart is also therefore a complete calendar tool describing the twelve divisions of the year in a concise and accurate way with a scientific notation in degrees revealing the precision reached by this period.

Dating the chart

Contrary to some other Dunhuang documents where a mention of a precise date is present or can be derived from the content of the document, as in calendars for instance, such a reference is not available for the Or.8210/S.3326 chart. The document was obviously meant to be used over a large interval of time. The importance of the chart has led several authors to conjecture about the exact date of the document. Needham quoted a date of 940 without giving any details and we have been unable to find the origin of this information.¹⁵ More recent works by Chinese scholars like Ma Shichang¹⁶ have considered the entire Or.8210/S.3326 document in which the charts are embedded and particularly the first section devoted to the cloud divination belonging to the category of weishu 雜書 (apocryphal texts from the Han dynasty),17 namely literature with esoteric explanations. From arguments based on the style of clothing worn by the archer at the very end of the document, the style of writing and the taboo characters in the text, this author dates the document from 705-10. Deng Wenkuan and Liu Lexian 18 also recognized, in the divination text of the first section, the important phrase 'according to your servant Chunfeng' 臣淳風言 which can be interpreted as the signature of Li Chunfeng (602-70), author of the astronomical chapters in the Jinshu and Suishu.

The sky charts might thus well originate from the very early Tang period. To obtain or confirm this age with some accuracy, a dating by means of radioactive carbon (C¹⁴) using the modern method of the particles accelerators is being considered.

Other astronomical documents in Dunhuang

The Or.8210/S.3326 star chart is by far the most impressive astronomical document among the Dunhuang manuscripts but not the only one. A number of other documents in Dunhuang have astronomical interest. In general they are calendars and divination or astrological texts with predictions according to atmospheric (winds, clouds, haloes, meteors, etc.) and astronomical (eclipse, occultations, planets, etc.) phenomena. Apart from these, only two other extant manuscripts have information comparable to Or.8210/S.3326.

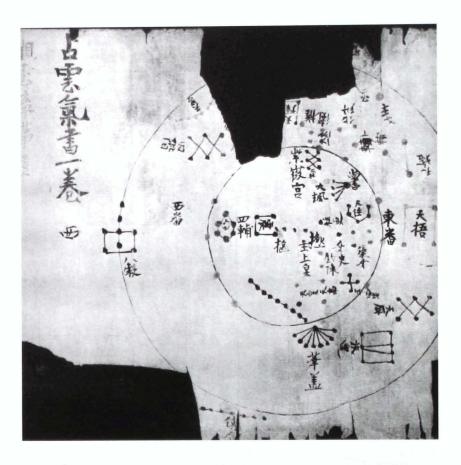
The first is another similar star chart but showing only the circumpolar region, the Ziwei enclosure (Ziwei yuan 紫微垣) (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4 North circumpolar region from a map in the Dunhuang County Museum.

Also found in Dunhuang caves, this map is more schematic than the Or.8210/5.3326 document. It is rotated by 180° with respect to the same region in Or.8210/S.3326.

Beidou (the Northern Dipper) is located in the torn zone to the top, thus hardly visible. In the inner circle, left, a non-completely closed black square is the asterism Sifu.

By courtesy of the Dunhuang County Museum.



The document is labelled 'A Book of divination by clouds and vapours' (占雲氣書). ¹⁹ It is very probably a part of a complete sky map like Or.8210/S.3326 but a large portion has been lost. It is said to be drawn on the recto of a Tang geographical map. The general appearance is similar to Or.8210/S.3326 but with noticeable differences. The stars are distinguished by the use of the only two colours, red and black, and the polar region is shown inside two concentric circles of radius 13 cm and 26 cm for a total size of 31 cm. The document is now kept in Dunhuang County Museum.

The second is the manuscript registered as P.2512 and is kept at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris. It has several sections, including a list of the *xiu* and a catalogue of stars. It comprises only text without drawing. The section labelled 'Treaty of stars according to the three schools of Master Shi, Master Gan, Master Wu Xian' 石氏甘氏巫咸氏三家星經 includes the complete lists of stars of the ancient astronomers Shi Shen, Gan De and Wu Xian. This manuscript has been studied first by Maspero and later by Deng Wenkuan and Liu Lexian.²⁰ The stars and constellations described there are globally the same as those drawn in

Or.8210/S.3326, since the source seems to be the same.

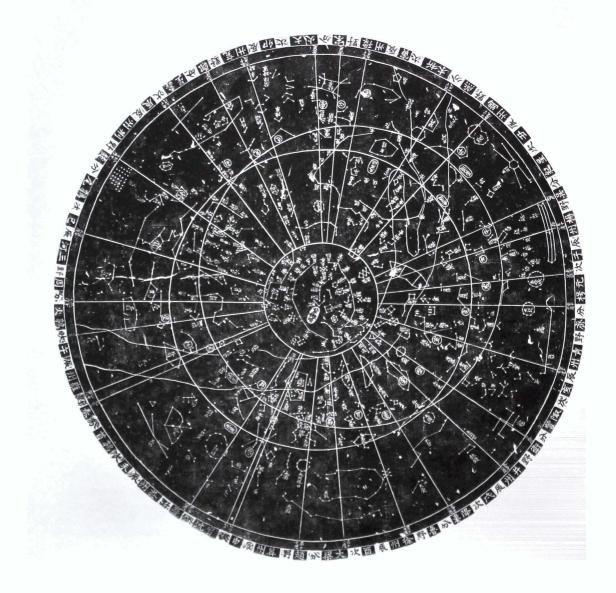
The use of the star map

As we have seen, astronomy in China was considered an important affair of state and the distribution of astronomical documents was certainly strictly controlled.21 Some of the Dunhuang documents, for example, can be considered as astrological handbooks intended for military use, and are thus very sensitive. 22 This might explain why very few copies of charts similar to Or.8210/S.3326 are found today. The star charts however have a much wider use and their presence in the large library built up in Dunhuang is by no means surprising. There is no indication that Dunhuang was the place where the astronomical observations were actually made. Most probably, they were conducted from places at or near the Chinese capitals, rather than from a remote place on the Silk Road such as Dunhuang. The document could have been brought there by a traveller or an official. The observations on which the charts are based extend from the Northern Pole to declination around 40 degrees South, indicating that they may have been obtained from Chang'an (Xian) or Luoyang, both capitals under many dynasties during this period. Noticeably, the Or.8210/S.3326 charts record the presence of Laoren (a Carinae-Canopus), which is a much more southerly star than all the others displayed, and hardly observable from Chang'an or Luoyang. On the map corresponding to the fifth lunar month, Laoren 老人 is misplaced towards the north, closer to the equator than it is in reality. Despite its southern position, the star is however also included in the 'Tianguan shu' by Sima Qian who indicates it symmetrically about Tian Lang 天狼 (Sirius) as 'a big star called "the old man of the south pole (Nan ji lao ren

Fig. 5 The Suzhou planisphere.

This stone engraved representation of the sky is accompanied by a notice written for the instruction of a future emperor (notice not shown here). Composed around 1193 (Song dynasty), and transfered to stone in 1247, it is more complete than the Dunhuang maps. It shows radial grids corresponding to the Chinese lunar mansions, an inner circumpolar circle, the equator, and an outer circle beyond which stars are no more visible from the observation place. All these circles are centered on the pole. One also notes the ecliptic, which cuts the equator at the equinoxial points, and the Milky Way in the form of double lines crossing from the bottom of the figure around the circumpolar circle and then to the left.

By courtesy of the Wen Miao temple, Suzhou.



簡極老人)". If the charts are more recent than Li Chunfeng the possibility exists that the observations were made by Yi Xing 一行 (683–727), a Tang astronomer who re-measured the positions of many stars in the Chen Zhuo list and travelled south to Hanoi (Vietnam), where α Carinae is observable.

A European comparison

One will never know who really drew the first map of the sky. It may well have been one of the early Greek astronomers such as Hipparchus or Ptolemy but it is at least equally likely and perhaps even more probable that it was a Chinese astronomer. The Greeks had only a theoretical and mythological interest in the heavens and they concentrated their attention on the ecliptic band where sun and planets circulate. For them, the universe of stars was the last of the celestial spheres, perfect and unchanged. On the other hand, the Chinese had behind them a plethora of observations and numerous notes on the dispositions of the heavenly bodies with respect to the equator, accumulated over centuries. With a constant preoccupation to detect and locate any unexpected changes, the urgent need for a precise map was obvious.

Why is the oldest available map found in China? On this matter, one can be more positive. Needham summed it up in a brief phrase: 'everything that exists in China is either lost or printed': in other words, there was large-scale document production in China from an early period. If charts also existed in European antiquity they had less chance to survive because of a comparative lack of such large-scale document production. The invention in China of both paper and printing gave them a definitive advantage and the dry climate of the Silk Road and lucky circumstances tipped the balance. The early production of the Dunhuang charts was later continued and greatly improved in China. Perhaps the most famous planisphere is the one engraved on stone, still exposed in the Wen Miao temple at Suzhou (Jiangsu). It was drawn in 1193 and transferred to stone in 1247.23 This celestial planisphere, called Suzhou Tian Wen Tu 蘇州天文圖, contains more than 1,565 stars24 in a precise circular map with a polar projection (see Fig. 5). Recent archaeological findings have revealed different earlier star drawings, also engraved on stone but none of them are comparable in accuracy and completeness with the Dunhuang manuscripts. A drawing with stars and the Milky Way was discovered in 1973 on the ceiling of a Luoyang tomb dated 526 and two 1.9 m circular stone maps showing only the xiu and the pole star, were unearthed in 1965 from a tomb near Hangzhou (Zhejiang), dated from 941.25 All these additional discoveries attest to the high level reached by Chinese observational astronomy in the Middle Ages.

By contrast, the same period in Europe is marked by a major stagnation, mostly dictated by the Aristotelian concept of a pure and perfect sky which made the observations of stars useless. Though celestial maps and globes are attributed to Greek astronomers, like Eudoxus of Cnidus, a contemporary of Plato, the

oldest surviving globe, the famous Farnese atlas, dates from the second century AD and shows only very pictorial and poetic pictures of the Greek mythology without any mention or relation to the stars.²⁶ In the same way, a Carolingian manuscript (dated 818), drawn according to Aratus, and sometimes referred to as the earliest European star chart, shows only naïve drawings of a few constellation figures, without stars.²⁷ The flag of observational astronomy was later taken back by the Islamic astronomers. The great Persian astronomer, Al-Sufi (903-86) was probably responsible for the first accurately drawn star chart in the Western world. Based on the Ptolemy 'Almagest' catalogue, his Book of Fixed Stars was illustrated with pictures of each constellation including the brightest stars represented by dots. Unfortunately, no contemporary documents survived and the earliest extant copies are from the twelfth century. The tradition of representing the sky finally came to Europe during the early Renaissance. The oldest true star map in Europe is probably the Vienna manuscript (c.1440) which contains the main northern constellations with a limited number of stars, plotted in a polar projection from the ecliptic pole.28

Conclusions

The Or.8210/S.3326 atlas of sky maps is a marvellous testimony to ancient Chinese astronomy through its graphic quality as much as through its natural content. It includes the stars visible to the naked eye from central China, and although magnitudes are not indicated, the observers who produced the observational matrix of these charts were equally attentive to faint stars and to brighter ones. The absence on this chart of exceptional rare events such as novae or comets does not help the dating but consolidates the fact that the map was used as a standard reference material. Its most probable date makes it a remarkable document from the early Tang period (618–750). However the origin of its manufacture and its real use remain unknown. One can conjecture that it was used for military and travellers' needs, and probably also for uranomancy as suggested by the cloud divination texts preceding the charts.

It is obviously the spectacular outcome of a very long astronomical tradition of observations and catalogues. This chart supersedes all other ancient Chinese available sky maps until the eleventh century, maps which are all incomplete and more decorative than astronomically precise. It summarizes the knowledge accumulated during centuries of constant observations by means of instruments such as armillary spheres, which were more developed than in the Western world.

The authors acknowledge scholarly suggestions by M. Kalinowski and V. Durand-Dastès and graphic work by O. Hodasava.

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NOTES

- Couvreur, Chou king, 95. Legge, The Chinese Classics, 82-83, but see Needham, Mathematics, 189 and note a) who summarizes the research on this.
- Needham, Mathematics.
- Chavannes, Les Mémoires Historiques.
- 4 Ibid. 3: 402-403; Maspero, "L'astronomie", 267.
- 5 The lost texts were titled *Tian Wen* 天文 for Shi Shen and *Tian Wen Xing Zhan* 天文星占 for Gan De.
- 6 Needham, Mathematics, 197 and 201. The Jinshu is translated by Ho, Astronomical Chapters.
- 7 Ho, Astronomical Chapters, 67.
- 8 Extracts from the chart are shown as figs 99 and 100 in Needham, Mathematics 264
- 9 See for instance Chen, Zhongguo Gudai Xingtu and Chan, Chinese Ancient Star Maps.
- 10 Xi, Dunhuang Xingtu; Ma, Dunhuang Xingtu de Niandai; Pan, Zhongguo Hengxing Guance shi; Deng, Dunhuang Tianwen.
- 11 Our identifications are in general agreement with the ones also proposed by Deng, Dunhuang Tianwen.
- 12 See for instance Ho, Astronomical Chapters, Yi, Correlative Star Catalogue, Sun and Kistemaker, The Chinese Sky.

- 13 Maspero, "L'astronomie", 271; Needham, Mathematics, 263.
- 14 Maspero, "L'astronomie", 271 and 319; Needham, Mathematics, 265.
- 15 Needham, Mathematics, 264.
- 16 Ma, Dunhuang Xingtu de Niandai.
- 17 Sun and Kisternaker, The Chinese Sky, 23.
- 18 Deng and Liu, "Uranomancie", 76.
 - 19 Zhongguo gudai tianwen.
- 20 Maspero, "L'astronomie", 272, n. 3; Deng and Liu, "Uranomancie", 76.
- 21 See Rong's paper in this collection for the role of Dunhuang officials in astronomy and also Whitfield, "Under the Censor's Eye", for a discussion of censorship of such documents at this period.
- 22 Ho, Science and Civilisation, 146.
- 23 Needham, Mathematics, 278; Chavannes, Mémoires, I: 19.
- 24 Chavannes, Les Mémoires Historiques.
- 25 Zhongguo gudai tianwen, 8, 72-73, see also Stephenson, "Stargazers of the Orient", 32.
- 26 Whitfield, Mapping the Heavens, 22-23.
- 27 Ibid., 24
- 28 Ibid., 68

AUREL STEIN, THE BRITISH MUSEUM AND THE INDIA OFFICE FRANCES WOOD

The greater part of the exhibits in this exhibition are from the Stein collections in the British Library, the British Museum, the National Museum, New Delhi and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The modern history of these exhibits – their discovery, dispersal, conservation, cataloguing and digitization – is an important and interesting story illustrated through Aurel's Stein early relationship with the British Museum and the India Office.

Aurel Stein was a Hungarian scholar who, after receiving his PhD from Tübingen on Old Persian and Indology studies and a period of study in England, was appointed as Principal of the Punjab University and Oriental College, Lahore. He had visited the British Museum to study coins during his stay in London in 1884 and again in 1886-87. In 1887 he left for India and in the late 1890s starting planning his first major expedition to the Khotan area. This was financed by the Government of India, Bengal and the Punjab, with assistance from the Survey of India, but in his initial application for funding Stein had promised that at least some of the finds would be deposited in the British Museum. In fact, all the manuscripts and artefacts that he collected were sent to England across Russia and Europe and 'deposited' in the British Museum 'as a temporary measure' in July, 1901.3 By the time they arrived an arrangement had been made by the Government of India's Board of Revenue and Agriculture by which terms the antiquities collected

by Stein were to be divided between the museums in Calcutta and Lahore and, in return for taking care of the collection and providing facilities for Stein's team to work on them, the British Museum would also receive a share. Stein always retained control over the sorting, listing and study of the collections before they were sent to their intended destinations. Despite the fact that many items from his first and second expeditions were intended for Indian museums, they were first sent to London for listing and study. While occupying considerable space in the British Museum, they were in the hands of Stein's own team, paid for by the India Office, often for many years. The Museum did not actually take charge of its share of the first expedition finds until 1916 after an exchange of letters between the India Office and Lionel Barnett, Keeper of the Department of Oriental Printed Books and Manuscripts in the British Museum.

Emboldened by the success of his first expedition, Stein began to plan a second trip and on 15 February 1905, a letter was sent 'from the Government of India' to the Director of the British Museum concerning Stein's proposal for 'resuming and extending his archaeological explorations in Eastern Turkestan' hoping that the British Museum might, this time, 'contribute to the expense of the expedition'. The total cost was reckoned to be £5,000, towards which the Government of India was prepared to offer £3,000 and 'if... the British Museum is prepared to contribute the excess over

£3,000 to Dr Stein's proposed expedition, we shall be ready to hand over to the Museum, under such arrangements as you may approve, a portion of the articles found representing approximately two-fifths of their archaeological value.'6 Martin M. Read, Keeper of the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography wrote to the Director of the Museum, Edward Maunde Thompson, on 23 February 1905, saying that there was no need for haste because the Government of India was insisting that, before Stein set off again 'into dangerous country and beyond the reach of ordinary postal correspondence' it was essential that he finish his report on his first expedition and 'finally apportion' the finds between London, Calcutta and Lahore. Read considered that Stein would have to delay for a year as he could not possibly fulfil his duties (by now promoted to Inspector for Education and Superintendent for Archaeology in the North-west Frontier Province and Baluchistan) and finish his report (indeed Ancient Khotan did not appear until 1907, although Stein finished the preface in 1906 on his way back to Khotan in July 1906). Read proposed that the £2,000 required be taken both from his Department's funds as well as those of the 'Oriental Library' with the balance from the General Reserve. On 20 December, 1907, Maunde Thompson reported to the Treasury the British Museum Trustees' willingness to pay twofifths of Stein's expenses, on the understanding that the objects recovered would be divided according to the same proportion. By this time Stein was half-way through the second expedition.

Stein reported in a letter of 14 December 1908 that nearly a hundred cases of documents and artefacts from his second expedition were to be transported to England via India. Though he said it was impossible 'while in the field to make a systematic numerical record of the objects collected', he reported in a note marked 'Confidential' that, 'on leaving Ch'ien-fu-tung [Qianfodong, Dunhuang by the middle of June, I was able to take with me over 90 bundles of...manuscripts, containing about 1,200 separate texts in rolls or "pothis". As I succeeded in maintaining strict secrecy, there remained a hope of being able to make further acquisitions on my subsequent return to this vicinity*...*P.S This hope has been fully realised by the acquisition of 220 more bundles of manuscripts just received at An-shi, October 1. The number of texts is raised thereby to close on 4,000.' (Fig. 1) 8

When Stein and the hundred cases of manuscripts and antiquities returned to London in early 1909, their accommodation became a real problem. In late May, temporarily occupying a room in the Natural History Museum which he had to leave as the Museum wanted to make it the Students' Room for the Minerals Department, Stein fired off a letter condemning the space offered by the British Museum. The 'basement room...apparently hitherto used for the storage of old newspapers' had 'light wholly insufficient', threatening the 'constant strain' of 'having to work by artificial light. Neither during my official career in India nor in the course of my explorations have I been called upon to work in what without exaggeration may be designated as a sort of cellar.' He sug-

gested that it would affect the health of Fred Andrews, his chief assistant. At this point, there is a pencilled note from the British Museum, reflecting some impatience with Stein's tone, 'I should like to hear Mr Andrews speak for himself'. 9 Stein claimed that he would rather suffer the rigours of an expedition (and several of his toes had been amputated as a result of frostbite less than a year earlier) 'than daily imprisonment for prolonged hours in a room partially below ground and devoid of adequate lighting and air'. He continued, for his letters were never short, to raise the problem of the team of 'savants' who would be called in to examine the documents: 'it would be physically impossible to find space for them to work in the confined basement room quite apart from the consideration that they would be fully justified in refusing to give their (gratuitous) labours in a locality unfit for serious work'. Seizing every pretext, Stein continued, 'I need scarcely point out the undesirability of letting savants of European reputation carry away from their visit to the collection impressions of apparent neglect and indifference'. Here, again, the impatience of the Museum with Stein's tone is seen in underlinings of the words 'neglect' and 'indifference' and the addition of two exclamation marks. 10

As well as getting the President of the Royal Asiatic Society to write to the British Museum in protest, Stein threatened to move himself and what he sometimes referred to as 'my collection' to the Victoria and Albert but they would not have him, so there was no alternative but to make the best of the 'cellar'. He was not just concerned to have 'his' collection accessible for the preparation of an inventory and preliminary scholarly research, but also to provide space for his team to work. Apart from the visiting 'savants', many of whom selected items or parts of the collections to work on at home. Stein's assistant Fred Andrews was drafted in from Battersea Polytechnic Institute, London, where he had a half-time post and, in the summer of 1909, Miss F.M.G.Lorimer joined him to supervise the production of catalogue slips (for Stein's detailed report) and keep track of the savants and the parts of the collection entrusted to them.11 There were also various assistants, including a 'Mr Droop'. Andrews and Miss Lorimer were paid by the India Office Library, which also supplied wooden trays with glass tops and, after the Clerk of Works checked that there would be no 'injury to Museum property',12 the India Office further provided glass doors for the open cabinets lining the walls. When the team which had been working on the collection for a decade had finally been dispersed and most of the collection items settled in London or prepared for despatch to India, a list made on 26 February 1919, described India Office property still in the Museum: 'the collection of Tibetan documents from Miran, Mazar Tagh; 3 pieces of fresco requiring treatment (deposited with Mr Binyon); wooden frontage for shelving with glass doors; two sets of sliding glass doors in frames; trays with glass tops (181); trays, tops lost 7; typewriter; parcels weighing machine; Advance card index drawers 8; stationery cabinets, four-drawer: foolscap 1, quarto 1; box files (cardboard).13

Fig. 1 Bundle of manuscripts from Dunhuang.
Chinese scrolls were traditionally stored in
bundles, like those shown here, inside sutra
wrappers (see cat. 255).
The British Library, Photo 392/27(587)



Stein's demands continued. On 4 August 1911, he wrote to the Director of the Museum, Frederick Kenyon, on the need to speed up photography. To get better light, Andrews had been working in the open air outside the 'cellar' but had to beware of sudden showers of rain, so Stein proposed that a 'portable studio of suitable size' be put up outside, on the East Road. 14 This was installed in September but a year later, as a result of a memorandum from the Works Department which read, 're: Drainage of White Wing: the temporary studio would appear to come in the way of the proposed operations', it had to be dismantled.

Apart from the physical difficulty of housing for decades Stein's large collections and his personal team with their academic visitors, his attitude to the collections ('my collections') caused the British Museum two further problems. The first was that of the savants or external experts that Stein called upon to catalogue and comment upon his finds. He was insistent upon the superiority of European specialists, many of whom had to fall back on the skills of native speakers. 15 Edouard Chavannes, 'obliged to avail himself ...to a considerable extent of the assistance of Chinese literati' in his work on the woodslips from Stein's first expedition, requested £50 to recompense them. Unusually for the time, Chavannes mentioned his assistants by name and acknowledged their help in some detail in the preface to his catalogue. 16 Many of Stein's savants were allowed to take materials home to work on and though most were returned safely, this system caused some confusion. 17 When fragments found in 1919 amongst Rudolf Hoernle's papers were returned to the India Office Library, it was discovered that 'in most cases they bear numbers now allotted to other items'.18

The practice of taking documents home could also mean that documents were absent from the Museum for many years, making

it impossible for others to consult or list. This was the case with the Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang in what Lionel Barnett called 'l'Affaire Pelliot'. On 17 September 1910, Stein wrote to the Museum to say that Monsieur Pelliot, Professor of Chinese at Hanoi had 'expressed his willingness to undertake preparation of...an inventory'. For an honorarium of £200 he estimated that he could complete the inventory of about 9,000 items within a year. It was proposed that 'only a limited portion of manuscripts should be kept at one time in Monsieur Pelliot's residence, thus minimising any risks'. Pelliot himself was not undemanding. Stein wrote in January 1911 to ask that Pelliot, whom he described with his customary enthusiasm as 'exceptionally qualified, nobody more so', should be allowed 'exclusive rights to a dozen or so manuscripts' in order to publish them. Kenyon was unimpressed and wrote in a note to Lionel Barnett, 'In general I don't like providing exclusive rights to outsiders' and wondered 'if Dr Stein is a sufficient Chinese scholar to be able to compare M. Pelliot's competence with that of others'. 19 Lionel Barnett, himself a scholar of Tibetan, would have been completely aware how particularly well-qualified Pelliot was and defended his scholarship but when, in 1913, it became clear that Pelliot had done nothing, he reported to the Director, 'I enclose a report on the unsatisfactory Affaire Pelliot'. Though it was up to the Trustees 'to decide whether it is desirable to let the arrangment stand on its present footing for any longer', he suggested that his Assistant Keeper, Lionel Giles 'might do the work sandwiched in with his other catalogue. He is not by any means a specialist in this subject but he has a really good knowledge of the literary language and could make a useful handlist.'20

Some items from the Stein collection were first displayed in a private show at the Museum in 1910 at which Stein presided. He was



Fig. 2 Murals from Miran on display at the British Museum in 1914.

The murals were later sent to India and are now housed in the National Museum, New Delhi. Photography courtesy of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Stein Photo 28/7(4) delighted that conservators and scholars from France, including Pelliot, attended and that the display 'brought me in touch with some interesting and interested people.' The first public display was at the Festival of Empire in 1911 but the first public exhibition organized by the British Museum was in 1914 to commemorate the opening of the new King Edward VII galleries (Fig. 2).²¹ Though Stein himself was away in Srinagar during the planning stages, and though he himself acknowledged in a letter to Kenyon that 'writing from a great distance and with no knowledge of the available space, it would be useless for me to make any detailed suggestion', nevertheless, several pages of closely packed script followed. 'Do it by site... Petrucci could help with the paintings...put the connected frescoes together... take Andrew's advice on background colour and Miss Lorimer for detail...'²² The exhibition was not arranged by site and there is no record of the background colour.

The First World War interrupted much of the work on the Stein collection in various ways. Louis de la Vallée Poussin completed most of his catalogue of the Tibetan materials during the War when he was exiled in England but when he was able to return to France, he 'laid it aside' and it was not published until 1962 with additional entries by a series of others. Raphael Petrucci whom Stein had found in the University of Brussels, had begun work on the paintings from Dunhuang but died in 1917. His work was carried on by Edouard Chavannes (who died in 1918) and then by Arthur Waley who managed to complete the task and survive. ²³

The War also complicated the question of the division of the collection between London and India, the British Museum and the India Office. It was clear that the collection could not be moved during the War but work continued, both in conservation and mounting and in the study of the material. British Museum staff began to make suggestions about the fragility of the murals, documents and paintings and their susceptibility to transportation as well as the lack of suitable accommodation in India, hinting that a greater proportion of the material should remain in London. They suggested, with some support from Stein, that only 'climate-proof' materials should be sent to India, despite the two-fifths/three-fifths division that had been agreed in 1909. The India Office replied sternly that it intended to build a fine new museum to house the material. Laurence Binyon made many suggestions to strengthen the case for the British Museum keeping more paintings. He claimed that Lord Crewe had agreed with him that 'the Museum got no profit from the geographical results of the expedition. This ought to be considered in the division.'24 He stressed the amount of conservation work which had been carried out in the mounting studio in the British Museum. Such conservation work created 'the enhanced value given to many of the items allotted to India. This was taken no account of in the division. Also we have trained Sana Ullah.'25

Provoked by the considerable strength of feeling towards greater retention of collection items in the British Museum, the India Office proposed an addition to the group of arbitrators representing Indian interests in the discussion of division, in the form of Fred Andrews. This seems to have annoyed the Museum. The Keeper of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography complained that 'the numbers in Andrews' report convey nothing to me. For my own part I fail to see where Andrews comes into the business...Of course my own difficulty is that I have not been informed...' Equally irritated by Fred Andrew's appointment, whether from personal animosity, suspicion of 'Stein's assistant' or

simply in pursuit of a greater share of the collection, Binyon added a PS to his note on conservation, 'All the work done by Andrews on the frescoes etc had to be done again, he did it so badly.'

The period 1916–18 was fraught with tension over the division, but the material destined for India was finally designated and packed under Miss Lorimer's supervision, though even there, Stein intervened from a distance, complaining, 'Miss Lorimer at the same time informed me that the only help she was to have for this was an elderly clerk and a lady typist.' He added with the horror of a teetotaller, 'But I have now learned that the person who carried out the packing...used to be a packer in the wine trade.' The response from the India Office was that the person's 'having "previously been a packer in the wine trade"...is understood to imply experience in the packing of fragile articles having a considerable money value.' 26

Relations between the India Office Library and the British Museum improved after the bitterness of the process of division, with a period in which cordial letters were exchanged between Dr. D.F. Thomas, Librarian of the India Office and Lionel Barnett, enclosing Tibetan or Chinese fragments. Thomas and Barnett tried to sort out in a friendly manner where bilingual manuscripts might end up.27 But on January 23 1920, some hearts may have sunk slightly when a letter arrived from the Secretary of State for India in Council, announcing that 'Sir Aurel Stein may be expected shortly to arrive in this country with the manuscripts acquired on his third journey in Central Asia, and that he has proposed that the manuscripts should be temporarily placed in the India Office Library... The India Office regretted that it had found difficulty in finding the manuscripts from Stein's first and second expeditions and that it was 'impossible' to accommodate these further manuscripts and the Director of the British Museum was asked to 'do him the favour of allowing the manuscripts to be lodged temporarily in the British Museum...' 28

In the event, Fred Andrews had been supervising the building of a new house in Srinagar, with an annexe where the finds from the third expedition were photographed and inventoried, by himself and Miss Lorimer, the old team working in new surroundings. ²⁹ Thus, this time, the India Office Library and the British Museum had only to wait for their shares of the finds and house them: there were no more portable photographic studios to be erected or savants to be accommodated. ³⁰

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NOTES

- 1 Mirsky, Stein, 31-2. See Mirsky and Walker, Stein, for biographies of Stein.
- 2 Stein, Ancient Khotan, vi.
- Ibid., x.
- 4 Though the antiquities are now housed in the National Museum in New Delhi, this, founded in 1949, was constructed between 1955 and 1960, see Philip Davies, The Penguin Guide to the Monuments of India, volume two, London, Viking, 1989, pp. 41; their original destinations were the Central Museum, Lahore and the Indian Museum, Calcutta, established in 1814, see George Michell, The Penguin Guide to the Monuments of India, volume one, London, Viking, 1989, pp. 231.
- 5 British Museum archives CE 32/23/75/1 and 2, the second being the summary proposal by the Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture: Archaeology and Epigraphy set out in the name of Curzon and others. I am grateful to the Trustees of the British Museum for their kind permission to use this quotation and the others included in this essay.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 BM archives CE 32/23/2.
- 8 BM archives CE 32/23/16/2. The original draft, even stronger in tone, is in the British Library, India Office Private Papers, Mss. Eur.E.238/362-72.
- 9 I think this is in the Director's handwriting.
- 10 BM archives CE 32/23/23/2.
- 11 See Wang, "Stein's Recording Angel".
- 12 Pencil marking on BM archives CE 32/23/24.
- British Library, India Office Private papers, Mss. Eur. D.793.
- 14 The East Road, as its name suggests, is a service road running inside the outer wall of the Museum, on the east side. The White Wing, built in 1885, was an extension to the northern-most part of the East Residences. I am indebted to Peter Barber for this information.
- 15 Although Stein had worked closely with and had great respect for non-European scholars such as Pandit Govind Kaul in Kashmir, or even his Chinese secretary on his second expedition, Jiang Siye.
- 16 Chavannes, Les Documents Chinois, 1913.
- 17 This was common practice at the time.

- 18 British Museum archives CE 32/23/107/2.
- 19 British Museum archives CE 32/23/39. In fact Pelliot was a brilliant scholar but Stein himself had reservations on his lack of time to complete the work: doubts which were borne out.
- 20 British Museum archives CE 32/2350/1 and 2. In the end, Giles could not start work until 1919 because of the War and his catalogue was not published until 1957, see Wood, "Two Thousand years at Dunhuang", 106. It is clear that Giles eventually became ambitious to produce something more than a handlist, which aspiration may have made him considerably less than helpful to distinguished sinologists such as Wang Chongmin, visiting in 1938, to whom he refused access to all but 500 mss.
- 21 Guide to an Exhibition. The gallery is now renamed the Hotung Gallery and there is a case devoted to Central Asian finds consisting mainly of Stein collection items, with several items also on display in other cases.
- 22 British Museum archives CE 32/23/49.
- 23 Though not without a critical mauling from his Museum colleague, Lionel Giles. In his review of "A Catalogue of Paintings", Giles described it as 'sadly disfigured by all manner of mistakes, largely arising from carelessness; and I never remember to have seen a book issuing from the Oxford University Press with such a formidable number of misprints...! (Giles, "A Review").
- 24 CE 32/23/85.
- 25 CE 32/23/82/1 Sana Ullah seems to have been an Indian conservator.
- 26 British Library, India Office Private Papers Mss. Eur.D.793.
- 27 British Library, India Office Private Papers Mss. Eur.D.793 contains many of these.
- 28 CE 32/23/110/1.
- 29 see Wang, "Stein's Recording Angel", 215-222.
- 30 Of course, Stein's involvement with the Museum did not end here. Photographs of finds from his fourth Central Asian expedition, and a portion of artefacts and photographs from his four expeditions to Iran and the Indus valley from 1931-36 and aerial surveys in the late 1930s were also housed in the Museum. For a summary of Stein objects in the British Museum (and in other UK institutions) see Wang, A Handbook.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE CONSERVATION OF THE DUNHUANG MANUSCRIPTS IN LONDON MARK BARNARD AND

n early 1909 over a hundred crates of manuscripts, paintings and artefacts collected on Stein's second Central Asian expedition arrived at the British Museum from India. They included over 300 bundles of manuscripts from Cave 17 near Dunhuang on the Silk Road. Consisting mainly of Chinese manuscripts in scroll format and Tibetan ones in pothī format, both types made of paper, they were entirely different from anything that British Museum conservators had seen before. The conservation department, however, had some familiarity with Chinese and Japanese paintings and their materials and format, particularly since the acquisition of the Anderson collection in 18821 and in the decade after Stein's collection arrived in the Museum, a Japanese scroll-mounter supervised the conservation of the Dunhuang paintings. That his expertise does not appear to have been applied to the manuscripts may be the result of various factors. The paintings became the responsibility of the Department of Oriental Antiquities (OA) whose small conservation studio, even with Japanese expertise, could handle the hundreds of paintings involved but would have been overwhelmed by the thousands of documents2 which eventually became the responsibility of a different Museum department, the Department of Oriental Printed Books and Manuscripts (OPBM).

Oriental manuscripts and printed books were repaired in the British Museum Bindery which, in those days, tended to repair and conserve all its collections as if they were of European origin, binding soft-covered traditional thread-bound Chinese books and Tibetan $poth\bar{\imath}$ in the collection in tough western-style leather and buckram (Figs. 1 and 2). They had little experience of the variety of Chinese paper types made from hemp and mulberry, many dyed yellow, most of very fine paper, some burnished until the paper made a crisp crackling sound when touched.

When the manuscripts first arrived in the British Museum in 1909 (Fig. 3), they remained in the care of Stein's own team, consisting of Fred Andrews and various assistants, the longest-serving being Miss Lorimer. In 1913, Dr Denison Ross from the Museum's staff was assigned to the collection, 'to secure the preparation of an inventory.' The inventory, the survey of the collection of thousands of paper documents was Stein's first priority, feeding into his own survey of the expedition, Serindia, published in 1921. Conservation must have been discussed but as no records survive of work in the British Museum Bindery for this period, reconstruction of conservation work is a matter of searching through exhibition catalogues and published works.

It is probable that when items were selected for display, assessment of their condition was part of the selection process and this may have led to treatment in the Bindery. The first public exhibition of Stein material in the British Museum to include manuscripts was held in 1914. ⁴

Many of the items exhibited received conservation treatment

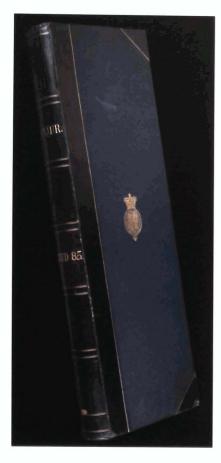




Fig. 1 (left) A Tibetan pothī in a western-style leather binding.

 $\textbf{Fig. 2} \ \ (above) \ \, A \ \, Chinese \ traditional \ book \ \, bound \ \, western-style$ in buckram binding.

Fig. 3 Stein's photographs of a group of manuscripts from cave 17 at Dunhuang showing the fragmentary state of many of them when they were removed from the cave. The British Library, Stein Photo 392/27(586)

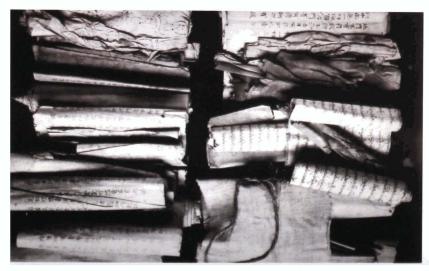


Fig. 4 Glass plate encapsulating Khotanese fragments from Stein's first expedition. In the 1920s many of the thousands of small fragments of manuscripts in the Stein collection at the British Library were placed inside glass sheets such as this.

including a manuscript of the Huayanjing (Or.8210/S.2724).5 Another exhibited manuscript, a fragment of a census of the Dunhuang area dated 416 (Or.8210/S.113) was placed between glass sheets: still an acceptable form of conservation today.

With the exception of the forty-seven manuscripts included in the 1914 exhibition, there are few clues to the conservation treatment of the manuscripts before 1921. It is likely that very little was done to them. One reason was the slow progress in finding a cataloguer. Paul Pelliot proposed to Stein in 1910 that he prepare 'an inventory' but it was not until 1917 that Pelliot ackowledged that he did not have the time to do the work. Another was the concentration on those parts of the collection that were to be divided between the British Museum and the India Office, such as paintings and documents in various 'Indian' languages: this included most of the Tibetan pothī. The largest single collection, that of Chinese manuscripts, was always intended to remain in the British Museum so it was to some extent neglected. The First World War was another reason for delay.

Bindery records survive from 1921, with lists of manuscripts, including Stein manuscripts sent 'for repair'. Though no details are given, it is apparent from the manuscripts themselves that there were several different treatments used. These were all carried out with the best of intentions and to the highest contemporary standards by men who had had long experience of working on western books and manuscripts, who struggled to find suitable methods to deal with these very different objects. 6 Particularly fragile fragments were placed between glass (Fig. 4). Smaller fragments with inscriptions on one side only were often pasted onto dark Kraft paper, the liberal use of paste leaving the paper stiff (Fig. 5). Where the paper of a scroll was judged to be fragile, the entire scroll might be backed with sturdy grey, manilla paper (Fig. 6). Damage to the longer scrolls was mainly at the outer end, so many had manilla paper backings applied just to the damaged part, leaving the rest of the scroll mercifully untouched.

It is difficult to be sure how and why particular scrolls were chosen for repair. It was no doubt no coincidence that a note on the





Fig. 5 Chinese fragment stuck onto thick western paper. Dark Kraft paper was used as a backing for some Stein fragments from the 1920s, the liberal use of paste leaving the paper stiff.



Fig. 6 Fragmentary Chinese scroll with lining. From the 1920s many of the Chinese scrolls were pasted onto western manilla paper. This is a lot thicker than the paper of the original and places tensions on the original when the scroll is rolled up.



Fig. 7 Lined Chinese manuscript. Lining of scrolls continued after the Second World War. Holes were cut into the lining to allow text on the verso of the manuscript - such as the title shown here - to be visible.



Fig. 8 Fragment lined and reinforced with silk gauze. Silk gauze started to be used from the 1940s to reinforce delicate manuscripts.

'history' of the Stein collection mentioned the fact that Lionel Giles, newly appointed Keeper of Chinese in the Department of Oriental Printed Books and Manuscripts, had started to compile a catalogue of the manuscripts in 1919 and, though we do not know his method of work, it seems likely that he gathered items to be sent to the Bindery as he worked through the collection. Between 1935 and 1944, he published a series of articles in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* which formed a chronological list of dated manuscripts in the Stein collection and particular conservation attention appears to have been paid to these dated manuscripts. Less than a third of those Giles listed were left untouched, the others all bear signs of 'repairs' in the Bindery. ⁷

Lionel Giles retired from the British Museum in 1940, and the collection, like much else in the British Museum, spent the war years in a Welsh slate mine. After the War, some of the materials used for repair changed, although the techniques remained similar. Thick Kraft paper was used to line scrolls and to back fragments (Fig. 7). The liberal application of paste left the documents and their linings stiff. Japanese tissue paper was available and fragile scrolls with texts on recto and verso were covered with silk gauze or net, again with liberal applications of paste (Fig. 8). Though conservation of the larger scrolls continued, it was probably in the 1960s that conservators' attention was turned to the substantial number of paper fragments of varying sizes which Giles had been unable to identify and had left to one side, stored in large blue cardboard boxes. 10

A large group of conserved fragments is associated with one particular curator, Alf Crowley, who worked for several years in the late 1960s, rolling almost a thousand Stein fragments (Or.8210/S.7006-S.7889) into tight manilla scrolls tied with tape (Fig. 9). Around the same time, distinguished Japanese visitors expressed serious criticism of the work that had been done on the Stein manuscripts in the past but Peter Lawson, head of the new Oriental Conservation Studio, and Howard Nelson, Assistant Keeper of the Chinese collections, continued to resist pressure to mount all the manuscripts as if they were paintings, and sought other methods of conserving the fragments. They visited Japan and the National Library of China in 1976 where they first met the young Du Weisheng of the Conservation Studio.¹¹ For a short period in the mid 1970s, Stein fragments were mounted together in series, as scrolls, but less tightly rolled than Alf Crowley's manilla rolls (Fig. 10). Though this method made more of the fragments available, it was still felt that backing and mounting was an unsatisfactory solution. A young conservator, Ian Moor, conducted experiments in patching damaged scrolls using liquidized paper fibre, imitating the technique by which the original paper was made.

After much experimentation and research, it was decided to use a mixture of very modern and very traditional techniques to continue the conservation of the Stein manuscripts. Fragments are now sewn into a very stable polyester film, which allows readers to see the original clearly and which is easily reversible. (Fig. 11)



Fig. 9 Examples of Alf Crowley's conservation.

In the 1960s Alf Crowley, a conservator in the British Museum, worked on over a thousand Stein fragments rolling them into tight manilla scrolls secured with tape.



Fig 10 Fragments mounted as scrolls.

In the mid-1970s many of the remaining, unconserved
Stein fragments were mounted together in series on scrolls
with a wooden roller.



Fig. 11 Fragments in Melinex.

From the 1980s thousands of Stein fragments have been flattened and encapsulated inside Melinex, a stable polyester film, an industrial sewing machine used to stitch around them (with a small gap) so stopping them from slipping about. These sheets are easily stored and both sides of the manuscript can be viewed by readers without any direct handling of the original. The labels giving the pressmark can also be sewn inside the Melinex, as shown here.

Figs 12-18 Conservation of Chinese scroll Or.8210/S.4193. The British Library Oriental Conservation Studio uses Japanese hand-made paper to reinforce fragmentary manuscripts so making them stable for long-term preservation and handling by readers.



Fig. 12 Paper for edge repair after it has been cut with water and a fine brush to match the damaged edge of the original manuscript.

Fig. 13 Repair pieces being prepared for attachment.





Fig. 14 Starch paste being applied to repair edge.

Fig. 15 Repair paper being attached to the edge using





Fig. 16 Blotting paper is used to dry the repair.

Fig. 17 After repair paper has been attached the scroll is then left on a drying board for three months.





Fig. 18 A silk tie is attached to the completed scroll which is rolled around a thick but light roller of paulownia wood and placed inside a custom-made paulownia wood box for storage.

Fragmentary edges, holes and missing areas in longer scrolls are reinforced with hand-made paper (Figs. 12-17), now usually acquired from Japan, which has been dyed in advance to tone with the original scroll.¹¹ When finished it is rolled onto a thick but light roller of paulownia wood and stored in specially made paulownia wood boxes (Fig. 18). Almost all of the conservation work on the Stein manuscripts today consists of removing hard, unsuitable backings put on many decades ago, delicately repairing and restoring the original. Two such cases of unique items which were conserved for this exhibition are the Diamond Sutra, the world's earliest dated complete printed book (cat. 262), and the Sutra of the Ten Kings (cat. 297). 13

> Mark Barnard is Head of the Oriental Conservation Studio at the British Library and has been working on the Stein collection for over ten years.

NOTES

- See Wood, "The Late Arrival", 77.
- Now known to be c. 15,000 items, though at the time, the more complete mss. were estimated to amount to c. 9000, see "Stein Collection history", notes on blue slips, British Library Archive.
- "Stein Collection history", British Library Archive.
- A Guide to an Exhibition of Paintings, Manuscripts and other Archaeological Objects collected by Sir Aurel Stein, K.C.I.E in Chinese Turkestan, British
- The early repair has been removed and the condition of the manuscript greatly enhanced as a consequence.
- An unfortunate aspect of these early repairs was the failure to match the paper of the original and that of the repair, particularly in weight and type. There were lighter papers available that would have been more suitable but the idea seems to have been to use 'strong' manilla paper to strengthen and protect the fragile original. Had Japanese techniques been followed, they would not have been much better for it would have been the practice to mount the manuscripts, as if they were paintings, adding layers of backings which would have been inappropriate to a document.
- Though a considerable proportion have had the heavy manilla removed and their condition greatly improved over the last decades. See for example Or.8210/S.797, S.2925, S.996, S.2106, S.81 and, indeed, S.2724 which may have been repaired prior to exhibition in 1914.
- See Barnard, "The British Library Stein Collection", 16.
- It was eventually discovered that there were about 7,000 of these, presenting a substantial conservation problem by virtue of their sheer number.
- Du Weisheng made a long visit to the British Library in 1989-90 assisting in the conservation of Stein fragments.
- 12 See David Jacobs and Barbara Rodgers, "The Toning of Japanese Paper and Tissue with Cartasol K Direct Dyes", unpublished paper, The British Library, 2000.
- 13 Full details of this conservation can be seen on the IDP website, http://idp.bl.uk. Much preliminary work was done on analyzing the paper dyes before conservation work started and the results are summarized in Fields and Seddon, The Diamond Sutra.

The Catalogue

Samarkand: Trade, Travel and Faith

Khotan: A Kingdom of Remarkable Diversity

Kroraina: Settlements in the Desert

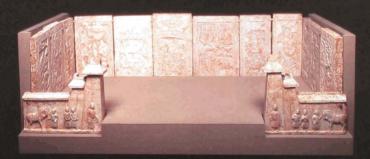
Miran: War and Faith

Dunhuang: Official and Religious Life

Gaochang: Death and the Afterlife



SAMARKAND: TRADE, TRAVEL AND FAITH



Cat. 1 A carved marble funerary couch of a 6th-century Sogdian resident in China (see pp. 114–17)

North of the modern town of Samarkand lies a grassy plateau called Afrasiab (see pp. 20–22), named after an evil ruler of the Iranian national epic, the Shāhnāma or 'Book of Kings' (cat. 3). This marks the site of the first city of Samarkand from its foundation in the seventh or sixth century BC up to the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century AD.

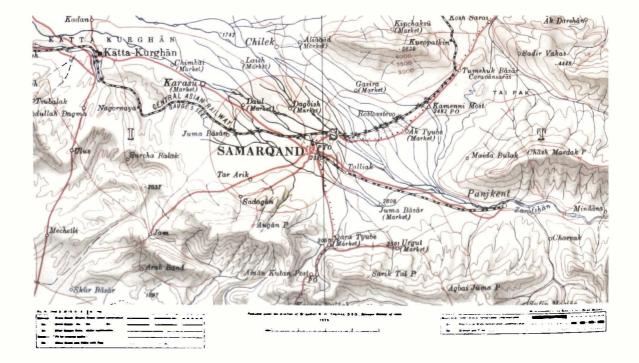
Samarkand - in present-day Uzbekistan - lies on the Zerafshan river which rises in the Pamirs to the east and runs westwards into the desert (in antiquity it reached the Oxus, today the Amu-darya). This is a strategically important area for any Central Asian power and its tumultuous history reflects this. Soghd, the name of the country, first appears in the Avesta (the sacred book of the Zoroastrians) and in the great inscription of Darius. Since the Persian domination in the sixth-fourth centuries BC it has been subject to successive waves of invasions. The list of its conquerors reads like a timeline of Central Asian empires. Alexander the Great conquered the city (called Maracanda by his historians) in 329 BC. After less than two centuries of a probably intermittent domination the Greeks were supplanted by various nomadic peoples, one of which, the Yuezhi, established an empire to the south, from Bactria to Northern India in the first century AD. Sogdiana did not become part of it, but this great empire, de la Vaissière argues in his essay here (see pp. 19-23), served as a catalyst for the Sogdians. By the third century AD Sogdiana was again overrun by nomads, this time Huns (distant cousins of those of Attila), then the Hephthalites, and eventually the Turks in the midsixth century. Under their sovereignty Sogdiana achieved a measure of independence as a linked series of city-states and the Sogdians became the principal merchants of the Silk Road. They established a long-reaching network stretching west and east from Samarkand and moved with their families to important market towns along the route, setting up sizeable communities in the Chinese capital, Chang'an, more than two thousand miles to the east, and with more occasional but direct links to Constantinople, about the same distance west.

The Sogdians had their own spoken language belonging to the Iranian group and, from about the first century BC, they adapted the Aramaic script to transcribe it. Graffiti on mountain rocks on the Karakorum route south from Sogdiana are probably contemporaneous with a bundle of letters in Sogdian left in one of the Chinese watchtowers north

'One of the largest and most perfectly beautiful cities in the world. It is built on the back of a great river where the inhabitants promenade after afternoon prayers.'

Ibn Battuta 1333 (H. A. R. Gibb 1929)

of Dunhuang. These reveal the extent of the merchant network in the third and fourth centuries AD (cats. 191–2). Cat. 2 is one of the few examples of a Sogdian Zoroastrian document, surprising given that Zoroastrianism was the traditional religion of the Sogdians. But just as the conquerors of Sogdia encompass almost all the major Silk Road empires, similarly Sogdian religions also reflect the diversity of faiths. At an unknown date followers of Mani, who in the third century had founded a new religion in Persia which was soon persecuted by the Sasanians, arrived in Sogdiana. Manichaeism got a foothold in China in the seventh century. Manichaeans developed their own script, a variant of Aramaic



'The capital [of the kingdom of Samarkand] was above 20 li in circuit (c.6 miles), exceedingly strong and with a large population. The country was a great commercial entrepôt, very fertile, abounding in trees and flowers, and vielding many fine horses. Its inhabitants were skilful craftsmen, smart and energetic. All the Hu (Sogdian) states regarded this country as their centre and made its social institutions their model.'

Xuanzang c.630 (Watters, On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, 1904).

script, to write texts in various Iranian languages (including Sogdian) with a good degree of phonetic precision. Buddhist Sogdians (rare in their homeland, but numerous in China) continued to use their 'national' script for the texts of their religion, while Nestorian Christians used either this script or Syriac. While the scripts were adapted from their neighbours to the west, the paper on which many of these documents were written came from their neighbours to their east, the Chinese (however, as Gulácsi argues, the form and art of the book were also influences from the west (cats. 5-10)). Also from the west came the message of Judaism, which also left traces in the manuscripts found by Stein

By the end of the first millennium Sogdiana had become Islamic. New Persian was the spoken and written language. Sogdian has long died out as a written language although Russian philologists identified a group of people in the remote Yagnob valley in the Pamirs east of

Fig. 1 Map showing the Zerafshan river valley with the ancient Sogdian cities of Samarkand and Panjikent.

Extract from India and Adjacent Countries 1:1,000,000 map sheet 32, Bukhara, first edition.

Dehra Dun: Survey of India, 1929.

Fig. 2 Remains of the Afrasiab citadel where Alexander the Great killed Clitus

Photograph by Yury Karey; Courtesy of MAFOUZ

'Leaving Samarkand on the north-east ... we pass at no great distance from the mass of crumbling tumuli and mounds that marks the site of an ancient city, associated with the legendary hero Afrasiab, and supposed to have been the predecessor of the Maracanda of the Greeks ... No deliberate or scientific effort had been made to explore whatever secrets of the past - and they must be manifold and important - the ruins of Kaleh-i-Afrasiab can tell. This is one of the many chances of the future.'

Lord Curzon, 1888 (Russia and Central Asia, 1889, 235-36).

Samarkand (in present-day Tajikistan) who speak a language descended from a Sogdian dialect.

The Russian conquest in 1868 started a series of archaeological excavations in Samarkand. When Stein visited in June 1901 he had the chance to view antiquities in local museums and even to purchase some terracottas from the local market which reminded him of those he had found at Khotan (cats. 29-33, 89, 93). Important monuments from all periods have since been uncovered, notably Achaemenid and Greek fortifications, the Friday mosque, dwelling quarters and potters' workshops. But one of the most important finds was discovered by accident: in 1965 a bulldozer chanced upon a large hall of clay blocks, the inside walls of which had once been entirely covered by narrative paintings (see figs. 3-6). Since 1989 the French-Uzbek Archaeological Mission (MAFOUZ) has been in charge of the excavations, concentrating mostly on the northern part of Afrasiab, i.e. the acropolis. Significant new finds include

'Alexander leapt up in passion to kill Clitus. Clitus was hurried away outside through the doors over the wall and ditch of the citadel (where all this happened) by Ptolemy son of Lagus, but could not control himself, and turned back; he met with Alexander just as Alexander was calling out 'Clitus!' and cried, 'Here I am, Clitus, Alexander!' and there and then was struck with the pike and died.'

Arrian on Alexander's stay at Maracanda (Anabasis IV.8.9, transl. P.A. Brunt, Loeb Classical Library).

a huge granary from the Greek period used to store millet and barley for the needs of the garrison (the contents had been partly preserved by carbonization); two early Arab palaces, both from the mid-eighth century, one of which was certainly commissioned by Abu Muslim (the leader of the Abbasid revolution) on the model of the califal palaces of Syria and Iraq; and pleasure pavilions from the time of the Turkish Karakhanid dynasty (eleventh-twelfth centuries), the collapsed remains of which have revealed painted decoration (birds and flowers combined with Arab and Persian calligraphies, a Turkish guard, dancers, and a frieze of hunting dogs). They demonstrate an artistic level so far unsuspected for that period.

The Sogdians at the Crossroads of Asia (cat. 1)

How was the unique position of the Sogdians reflected in their art? Two monuments – one reproduced here, one displayed in this exhibition – can provide interesting clues.

The Samarkand mural painting known as the Ambassadors' Painting (below) adorned the reception hall of a large aristocratic house on the site of the ancient city (Afrasiab). It was commissioned, or at least inspired, by the king of Samarkand himself, at that time Varkhuman, whose reign in the 650s is attested by Chinese histories and who is mentioned in an inscription on the western wall. What is extant of the painting is now exhibited in a museum built near its place of discovery. Although the painting originally covered four walls in two registers, the upper register was largely destroyed by a bulldozer at the time of the discovery. The drawings shown here (Fig. 3) distinguish between what is actually preserved and what has been tentatively restored on the basis of analogies to other Sogdian paintings and our hypotheses concerning the general interpretation of each panel.

The themes of royal propaganda are carefully distributed along the walls. The rear wall, to the west, depicts the procession of foreign delegations at Samarkand (we presume that the scene, set in the open, was presided over by the oversized figure of King Varkhuman). To his left, representatives of neighbouring Central Asian principalities are bringing jewels or rolls of silk. Two of them are identified by inscriptions: the chancellor of Chaganian (a principality to the south of Samarkand) and the chancellor of Chach (the Tashkent region). They are preceded by

Turkish dignitaries who do not carry gifts, as they escort the envoys on behalf of the Chinese emperor; one of them comes from Argi (present-day Karashahr in Chinese Xinjiang also identified by an inscription). In the middle, two rows of Chinese and Turks are advancing upwards. The Chinese are bringing silk (in the triple form of cocoons, hanks and rolls of cloth) (Fig. 4); the Turks, recognizable by their long plaits, are shown again, seated all along the top of the preserved section. Further to the right are other arrivals introduced by a bare-headed interpreter; two Koreans (identified by the two feathers on top of their heads), follow two mountain people dressed in balaclavas and woollen socks.

The northern wall (below right) shows a different world: China. To the left a pleasure boat carries a group of Chinese ladies, including musicians and a slightly oversized figure who is most probably the empress (Fig. 5). To the right a group of riders, including the huge figure of the Chinese emperor, are hunting panthers, while servants are preparing traps. Here Varkhuman's propaganda presents his Chinese allies (who invested him, at least nominally, as Governor in 655) both as brave people, hence reliable, and as enjoying the good life as well, a feature which could only please the Sogdians.

The southern wall (below left), the best preserved, is entirely occupied by a riding procession which moves from the western wall, i.e. from Samarkand, towards the east. Once again one of the characters is greatly oversized: in this case he can be no one else than King Varkhuman himself. The procession is

led by an elephant which once carried the queen in a palanquin (no longer extant), followed by women riding side-saddle and identified as second-class wives by an inscription. All these characters move towards a small building which, relying upon descriptions of such New Year ceremonies in Chinese accounts of Sogdiana, appears to be the mausoleum of the royal ancestors. Several details in the procession demonstrate its ritual character: a saddled but riderless horse, probably destined for the god Mithra; four geese accompanied, like the horse, by a dignitary wearing a mouth-cover meant to preserve the sacred fire from defilement (Fig. 6); and two dignitaries riding camels and holding maces used in the Zoroastrian sacrifice (p. 106).

The scenes on the eastern wall, poorly preserved, have recently been identified as an evocation of India. At the left end a Greek sage, seated on a chair, is transmitting astrological science (symbolized by an armilla) to a squatting Indian disciple. Further to the right, some episodes of the legend of Krishna's childhood among the shepherds can be recognized.

Fig. 3 Line-drawing reconstruction of the Ambassadors' Painting at Afrasiab Mid-7th century: south, west and north walls Courtey of Frantz Grene and François Ory



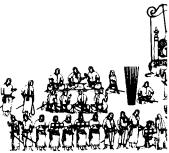




Fig. 4 A delegation from the Chinese court bringing gifts of silk to the King of Samarkand. To the right are Turkic delegates, recognizable by their long plaits. Detail from the Ambassadors' Painting, Afrasiab Courtesy of MAFOUZ







Taken as a whole, the Samarkand mural reflects the new geopolitical situation that arose in 658, when Chinese armies and diplomacy broke down the empire of the Western Turks, formerly the overlord of the Central Asian principalities. The Samarkand king Varkhuman poses as a loyal partner in this new situation. The western wall is largely a monument to the new pax sinica, celebrated through its two main instruments: Chinese silk brought by Chinese envoys and Turkic force now at China's service. But at the same time the depictions of foreign countries on the northern and eastern walls bear little relation to any experiences the Sogdian merchants could have had of them. The Chinese scenes are probably directly inspired by Chinese scrolls. 'India' is a collage of disparate elements, the ultimate origin of some of which can be traced in Graeco-Roman art; except for some costumes and hairstyles, no iconographical detail is genuinely Indian.

The reliefs from the funerary couch (cat. 1) present an image closer to the inter-

national reality experienced by Sogdian merchants. They belong to a series of five graves (to which two stray bases should be added), all executed in northern China in the second half of the sixth century. Three of the five carry Chinese inscriptions (one bilingual, Sogdian-Chinese), which identify the deceased as a *sabao*. This term more or less reproduces the Sogdian word for 'caravan leader' and was eventually applied to the leader of a foreign community in the Chinese administration.

The man for whom the Miho funerary couch was commissioned (cat. 1) remains anonymous, but judging from the subjects of the reliefs there is no doubt he was of Sogdian origin. Two panels at the centre of the long (rear) side are connected with the end of his life: in one of them he is an ageing man, attending a performance of Sogdian dance and music with his wife (1e); then he dies while travelling, as suggested by the loaded camels in an enclosure (1f). All other details pertain to the Sogdian funerary ritual (the

Fig. 5 The Chinese empress and her attendants in a boat on the north wall.

From the Ambassadors' Painting, Afrasiab

Courtesy of MAFOUZ

mourners; the priest with mouth-cover tending the fire; the family meditating in a mountainous landscape (probably bidding the last farewell according to the Zoroastrian ritual, i.e. at the moment when the body is abandoned to flesh-eating animals)). In another banquet scene, grotesque entertainers try to amuse a sad young man (1g: the deceased's grieving son? or himself at the onset of his career?). Proceeding from the middle of the rear side, then to the wings, we find an opening to distant countries, represented by their rulers: a Turk seated in his yurt (1c); riding Turks (including a ruler under an umbrella) (1h); Turks accompanying a loaded camel (1d); an Hephthalite or Northern Indian king rid-

ing an elephant (1i); then hunting (1a). These scenes probably symbolize the foreign countries with which the deceased had come into contact (on another funerary couch the sabao An Jia is himself taking part in such exotic scenes).

Two other panels show Sogdian gods and, as such, are unique in the whole series of the sabao graves. One shows the deceased riding with his wife in the direction of a festival presided over by the four-handed Nana, the chief goddess of Sogdiana (1j). Another panel shows a riderless horse under an umbrella (1b); this theme, widespread in the Chinese funerary art of that period (like that of the wives in an oxen-driven chariot, also represented on a Miho panel (1k)), has undergone

significant changes: the horse is an object of worship (a kneeling character presents him a vessel). As the fishes below suggest an association with water, this divine horse can be identified as Tishtrya, the Zoroastrian god of rain, or as the god of the Oxus river who was widely worshipped by the Sogdians.

All this being said, the reliefs devote very little space to trade, to which the deceased most probably owed his social position. In later Sogdian reliefs from China this theme disappears completely, to give way to the exaltation of a cosmopolitan but purely aristocratic way of life. Such values also permeated the art of Sogdiana itself, in marked contradiction with the social realities.



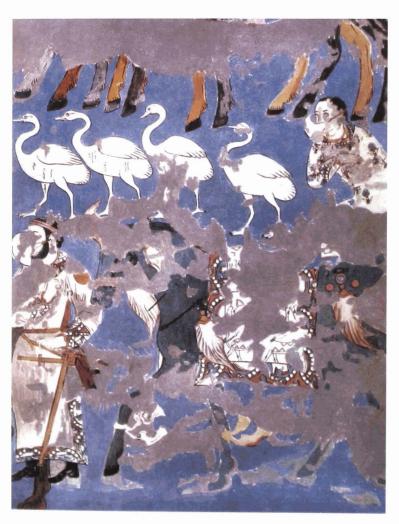


Fig. 6 Geese and their attendant with face mask to protect the sacred Zoroastrian fire from defilement.

From the Ambassadors' Painting, Afrasiab

Courtesy of MAFOUZ







Gateposts

1 Sogdian funerary couch

6th century White marble with pigments and gold

Gateposts:

(left) H: 51.5 cm W: 53.3 cm (right) н: 49.5 cm w: 56 cm Panels:

(a) H: 59.1 cm w: 25.7 cm D: 5.5 cm; (b) H: 60.9 cm W: 26.8 cm D: 5.7 cm; (c) H: 60.3 cm W: 27.4 cm D: 4.7 cm; (d) H: 61.3 cm W: 34.5 cm D: 5.6 cm; (e) н: 61.5 cm w: 34.6 cm D: 5.7 cm; (f) H: 60 cm W: 41.5 cm D: 5.1 cm; (g) H: 62.3 cm W: 35.2 cm D: 6.2 cm; (h) H: 61.9 cm W: 27.9 cm D: 4.9 cm; (i) H: 61.8 cm W: 25.4 cm D: 4.9 cm; (j) H: 60.8 cm w: 53.4 cm D: 4.7 cm; (k) H: 60.9 cm w: 31 cm D: 5.7 cm Miho Museum, Shiga, Japan, s104. 040

Lally, Chinese Archaic Bronzes, nos. 1a-k; Lerner, "Central Asians", pl. 1 (F); Metropolitan Museum, Shumei Family Collection, 142-45, no. 73 (E, F, J); Miho Museum, no. 125; Rong, "Miho Bijutsukan".

(gateposts); sF04. 014 (panels)









ь)















2 Zarathushtra fragment

c.9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 24 cm W: 27 cm The British Library, Or. 8212/84 (Ch.00289)

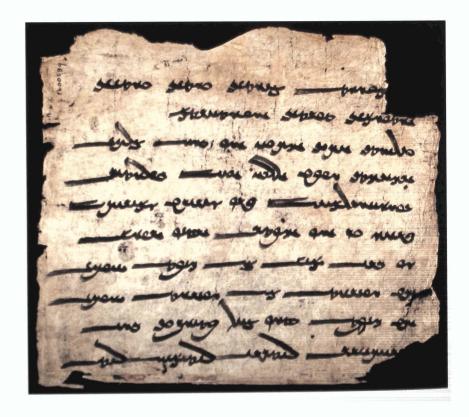
Stein, Serindia, 924; Sims-Williams and Hamilton, Documents turco-sogdiens, pl. 22; edited and translated by Sims-Williams, "The Sogdian Fragments", 46-48; see also Gershevitch, "Appendix", 75-82.

Zoroastrianism was the traditional religion of Sogdiana and probably that of the majority of Sogdians. This fact is not reflected by the Sogdian manuscripts from Gaochang and Dunhuang, most of which contain Buddhist, Manichaean and Christian texts. The present fragment is a rare example of Zoroastrian literature in Sogdian. The main part of the fragment, from line 3, describes a scene in which the prophet Zoroaster or Zarathushtra addresses an unnamed 'supreme god' (presumably Ahura Mazda):

At that time, when the king of the gods, the famous, excellent supreme god, was in the fragrant paradise in good thought, the perfect, righteous Zarathushtra came thither and paid homage from the left knee to the right, from the right knee to the left - and addressed him thus: O god, beneficent law-maker, justly-deciding judge ...

The preceding two lines contain a version of the 'Ashem vohu' (Ašəm vohū), one of the most holy prayers in the Avesta, the Zoroastrian scripture. Remarkably, this text is given neither in standard Sogdian nor in standard Avestan, but in a fossilized Old Iranian language more archaic than either which must date back to Achaemenian times, more than a millennium earlier than the manuscript in which it is preserved. For example, the word for truth is not represented by Avestan ašam, nor by a Sogdian equivalent such as * artu or ra tyāk, but by -rtm, a spelling which represents a form identical with Old Persian * artam.

NSW



3 Rustam fragment

c.9th century Stein 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 28 cm w: 29 cm The British Library, Or, 8212/81 (Ch. 00349)

Stein, Serindin, 924; Another fragment of this manuscript, preserved in the Bibliothèque mationale de France, Paris (Pelliot sogdien 13), contains the immediately preceding lines. Both fragments are reproduced in facsimile by Benveniste, Codices: pl. 193–94; and edited and translated by Sims-Williams, "The Sogdian Fragments", 48–61.

Although this manuscript is written in the same distinctive handwriting as the Zarathushtra fragment, almost certainly by the same scribe, it does not contain a religious text but an episode from a tale concerning Rustam, one of the heroes of the Shāhnāma or 'Book of Kings', the Persian national epic. The Sogdians were also familiar with the cycle of legends concerning Rustam, his red horse Rakhsh and his garment of leopard or panther

skin, all of which can be seen in frescoes from the city of Penjikent in Sogdiana. This particular episode does not occur in the Shāhnāma, but the occurrence of a number of Persian words in the Sogdian text suggests that it may well be translated or adapted from a lost Persian or Middle Persian original.

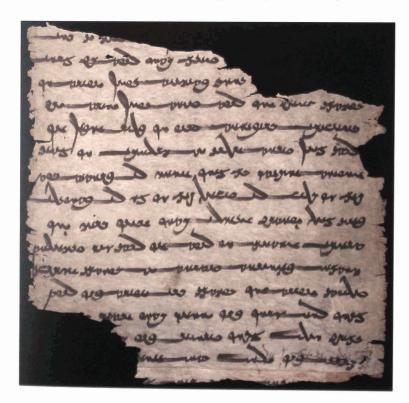
[Paris fragment] ... [The demons] immediately fled towards [the city]. Rustam went in pursuit right up to the city gates. Many demons died from being trampled; scarcely a thousand reached and entered the city. They shut the gates. Rustam returned with great renown. He went to a good pasture, stopped, took off the saddle and let his horse loose on the grass. He himself rested, ate a meal, was satisfied, spread a rug, lay down and began to sleep. The demons stood in malevolent consultation.

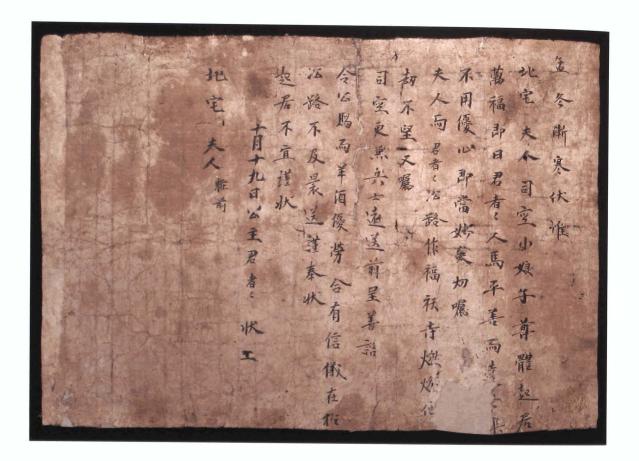
They said to one another: It was a great evil, a great shame on us, that we should have taken refuge in the city from a single horseman. Why should we not go out? Either let us all die and be annihilated or let us exact vengeance for our lords!

The demons, who were left a meagre remnant of their former strength, began to prepare great heavy equipment with strong armour and with great ... They opened the city gates. Many archers, many charioteers, many riding elephants, many riding *monsters, many riding pigs, many riding foxes, many riding dogs, many riding on snakes and on lizards, many on foot, many who went flying like vultures and ..., many upsidedown, the head downwards and the feet upwards: they all bellowed out a roar, for a long time they raised rain, snow, hail [lightning] and thunder, they opened their evil mouths and spouted fire, flame and smoke. They departed in search of the valiant Rustam.

Then the observant Rakhsh came and woke Rustam, Rustam arose from his sleep, quickly donned his leopard-skin garment, tied on his bowcase, mounted Rakhsh and hastened towards the demons. When Rustam saw from afar the army of the demons, he said to Rakhsh [beginning of the London fragment]: Come, sir, run away little [by little]; let us perform [a trick] so that the demons [pursue us] to the flat [plain ...]. Rakhsh agreed. Immediately Rustam turned back. When the demons saw, at once both the cavalry and the infantry quickly hurled themselves forward. They said to one another: Now the chief's hope has been crushed; no longer is he prepared to do battle with us. By no means let him escape! Do not kill him either, but take him alive so that we may show him evil punishment and harsh torture! The demons encouraged one another greatly; they all howled and departed in pursuit of Rustam. Then Rustam turned round and attacked the demons like a fierce lion attacking a deer or a hyena attacking a flock or herd, like a falcon attacking a [hare or] a porcupine attacking a snake, and he began [to destroy] them ...

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4 Letter from Princess Jun Zhezhe

10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 29.8 cm W: 42 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.2241

Giles, "Dated VI", 155; Giles, "Six Centuries", 32; Giles, Catalogue, no. 7410; Waley, "Iranian Temples", 124; Tang and Lu, Dunhuang Shehui 5 . 23; Yingzang 4: 53; Tan, "Jun Zhezhe", 100-14; Grenet and Zhang, "Last Refuge", 182, 185, n, 36.

The Zoroastrian faith did not stop at Sogdiana, but it probably made most converts there. By the fifth century Sogdian merchants and Persian envoys had taken their faith south into India and as far east as China and there were temples in both capitals, Chang'an (Xian) and Luoyang, but little evidence of local converts.

This letter is a rare example of evidence of Zoroastrianism in Dunhuang, a major Silk Road town en route to China from Samarkand. It is written in a good hand and from the Princess Jun Zhezhe of the Ganzhou Uighurs to her friend, Madame Sikong, Mistress of the North House. It mentions lighting a fire in the Zoroastrian Temple in order 'to bring prosperity along the road'.

Manichaean Book Art (cats. 5-10)

Book art was the most important artistic medium for the Manichaeans. Already in Mani's teachings, the written word played an integral role. Raised in a cosmopolitan intellectual climate of late antique Mesopotamia, Mani (AD 216-76) spoke several languages (Parthian, Middle Persian, Aramaic, and possibly Greek) and was highly literate. Religious books were written by him to guard against later corruption of his thoughts.' In Mani's view, the greatest problem with the other religions was that the messages of true prophets (such as Zoroaster, the Buddha and Jesus), had become corrupted by later generations who then had the task of committing their prophets' teachings to writing.2 Mani not only wrote in order to reach the illiterate, also painted representations of his message in his Picture-Book. This became part of the Manichaean canon.3 From later times, a great appreciation for book art is documented in literary accounts throughout the Manichaean world, even by their enemies. For example, a ninth-century Muslim author writes: 'We may compare the lavish expenditure of the Zindias [Manichaeans] on the production of their books with that of the Christians on their churches.'4 Similar documentary evidence is known from Northern Africa, as well as West, Central, and East Asia. In these vast areas, Mani's missionary world religion existed in phases between the midthird and the late fifteenth centuries, spreading from Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean

region and coastal China.5 Experiencing severe persecution for most of its history, precious little survives from Manichaean books.

Actual remains of Manichaean illuminated manuscripts are known today only from Eastern Central Asia, where this religion was supported by the ruling elite of Turkicspeaking Uighurs between the early ninth and early eleventh centuries.6 At that time, the Uighurs had a powerful military presence along the northern borders of China, allowing them to profit from military services and control Silk Road trade (cats. 270, 273).7 Their rich sponsorship is evident on the remains of Manichaean books,8 most examples of which were discovered in the Gaochang region (present-day Xinjiang, China) by Prussian expeditions between 1902 and 1914, and now are housed in Berlin. Eighty-two fragments of Manichaean illuminated manuscripts survive.9

The Manichaean corpus of mediaeval Central Asian book art represents the oldest illuminated manuscripts known from this part of the world. One fragment (cat. 5) was radiocarbon-dated to about the tenth century based on which a comparative study confirmed that the West Asian ('Persian') painting style seen on its miniature was in use until the last era of the Uighur support.10 This paper fragment represents the lower half of a bifolio that once belonged to an illuminated anthology of religious literature, with sections of four Manichaean script texts in Parthian and

Middle Persian languages." Only folio 1(?) is illuminated. The recto (illustrated) contains a marginal and an intracolumnar painting. The latter depicts a Sermon Scene on a blue background, oriented sideways. The verso incorporates floral and scarf motifs around one of the names within the benediction. Along the outer margin, pieces from a figural scene are preserved. 12

Uighur Manichaean book art displays a uniquely high quality artisanship, despite its fragmentary condition. The stages of illumination, usually concealed in the final product, are frequently revealed within damaged paintings. On cat. 6 much of the under-drawing is exposed in addition to the blank areas left under lost gold leaves on the originally blue background.13 This codex folio contains a Middle Persian language and Manichaean script benediction on the sacred meal and the leaders of the community.14 Both sides are illuminated. Along the upper margins, now faint floral and scarf motifs enclose the headers. On the recto (illustrated), the busy pictorial program of sideways oriented figures incorporates an intracolumnar painting that represents a visual rendering of the goal of being Manichaean: The Work of the Religion as referred to in Manichaean literature.15 Enclosing the miniature, red outlines convey two lotus flowers with music-playing putti. The stem of one lotus plant in a pool of water is captured at the bottom margin. Numerous

1 Mani's works include The Gospel, The Treasure and The Book of Mysteries, in addition to letters and hymns as listed in the Coptic Psalm-Book (Allberry, Psalm Book, 46-47) and the Chinese Compendium (Haloun-Henning, Compendium, 194-95 and 204-10).

2 Kephalaia 7.18-8.29 (Gardner, Kephalaia, 13).

Kingdom".

- Refutations 126 (Reeves, "Manichaean Citations", 262-63), also see Gulácsi "Mani's Picture-Rox"
- Kitab al-hajawan, prior to 847 (233 AH), translation after Arnold, "Book Painting" 1936, 1817.
- 5 On the history of Manichaeism, see Lieu, Manichaeism. See Clark "Pothi-Book" and Moriyasu, "Western Uighur
- 7 On the history of the Uighur Empire (744-841) and their sedentary realm in the Tarim Basin (841-1259), see Mackerras, The Uighur Empire and The Uighurs.
- 8 Numerous fragments contain textual and visual references to members of the Uighur court. Benedictions list their names and ranks. Book paintings show their presence in Manichaean religious life, capturing them as they go through conversion rituals (Conversion Scene on MIK III 4979 recto), donate food to the elect (Alms Ser-

- vice Scene on M 559 recto), listen to sermons (Sermon Scene on no. 7), and observe annual celebrations of the church (Bema Scene on MIK III 4979 verso)
- Besides the seventy-five illuminated Manichaean manuscript fragments housed in the State Museums of Berlin and Berlin State Library, seven additional fragments are known from other collections such as the British Library London: the Institute of Oriental Studies, St. Petersburg; Ryukoku University, Kyoto; and the Turfan Museum. For detailed surveys see Gulácsi, "Identifying the Corpus" and "Text and Image".
- 10 The result confirms with 96% probability that the paper of the manuscript was made within a 126-year period, between 889 and 1015 ("Dating the 'Persian"").
- 11 The texts include a Parthian parable and a Middle Persian benediction on the religious and secular leaders of the Turfan region on folio 1(?), and a Middle Persian hymn to God (the 'Father of Greatness') and a Middle Persian treatise on the origin of the world on folio 2(?). For the transliteration and translation see BeDuhn. "Middle Iranian and Turkic Texts". 221-24.
- 12 In the lower half of this Sermon Scene, members of the

- Uighur royal family (identified by their headgear) are depicted listening to a sermon. In the upper half, two elects seated on lotus supports perform the sermon. Between them, an altar-like cloth-covered table is shown.
- 13. For a study on the layers of Manichaean book paintings in connection with Cat. 5 see Gulácsi, "Reconstructing Manichaean Book Paintings".
- 14 The text started already on a previous page and continued on subsequent pages, suggesting that this folio derived from a hymn- or a service-book. For the transliteration and translation see BeDuhn, "Middle Iranian and Turkic Texts", 228-30.
- 15 Lay members of the community provide food. By consuming it the elects separate the light from its captivity in darkness and send it up to join the divine by using their bodies as instruments of liberation. In this painting, the divine hand reaches to receive the light carried in the 'ships of light', the sun and moon, represented originally by now vanished gilded crescent and disk shapes. For a study on the iconography of this scene, see Gulácsi "Reconstructing Manichaean Book Paintings". especially 120-25.

additional Manichaean paintings demonstrate the liberal use of expensive materials such as lapis lazuli for the blue background and gold leaf to capture book covers, hems of garments, food vessels, and stems of plants.

Remnants of this art also document various innovations with the materials and formats of the book medium. The Manichaean invention of silk codices was most likely catalyzed by the close proximity of the Chinese tradition which used high quality tightly woven silk for scrolls (cat. 137). In order to form the silk codex folia, paper was used as stiffener between the textile layers, as indicated by nonilluminated examples.16 The silk fragment illustrated here (cat. 7) contains a Sogdian language Manichaean script hymn, possibly to Mani.17 On the upper margin, enlarged countered letters form the header, which is enclosed by floral vines, scarves, and a plate filled with symbolic food, featured sideways. The program of decoration and the overall page arrangement accord well with Manichaean paper codices. Numerous silk fragments that hold painted or embroidered religious scenes are conveyed on scales comparable to those of illuminated manuscripts, and have been thought to derive from textile-books, possibly scrolls, such as the painting with the Deities of the Moon and Earth (cat. 244).18 This silk fragment belonged to a larger textile of unconfirmed shape and function that once included a geometrical border along its right and possibly another framed scene on the left. The blue background and the black rim of the image define a cohesive composition of an imagined space with a large moon above the figures and pomegranate plants. The pothi or palm-leaf format, an Indian book format, is seen employed uniquely for Manichaean purposes in an illuminated paper fragment (cat. 8). This almost complete sheet retains a Manichaean script text in

Uighur language, The Great Hymn to Mani, that began an anthology with originally about twelve texts on fifty leaves.19 The recto holds the frontispiece of the manuscript, an Elect in Paradise Scene (illustrated).20 In accordance with the rule of orientation of book paintings in Manichaean codices, this image is featured sideways in relation to the direction of writing on the verso.

Arguably, the most distinctive characteristics of Manichaean book art is its system of sideways oriented paintings. As confirmed by a survey of all currently known Manichaean illuminated fragments, the figural scenes on these manuscripts are positioned on their sides in relation to the direction of the writing. This special feature connects Uighur Manichaean book art to a little-documented episode of mediaeval West Asian book illumination, seen mainly through examples of Eastern Christian (Syriac and Armenian) illuminated Bibles, As comparative examples, two such codices are presented here from the collection of the British Library: a Syriac Gospel-book from 932 (cat. 9); and an Armenian illuminated Bible from 1317 (cat. 10). The first and only illuminated page in the Syriac parchment codex is decorated with a simple ink drawing of a clerical figure identified as 'the bishop of Abba.'21 The Armenian paper codex contains seven sideways oriented fully painted scenes on the life of Christ. These are incorporated as fullpage images in the beginning of the codex.22 Similarities between Manichaean and Eastern Christian illuminated manuscripts as seen in their sideways-oriented images and certain scribal as well as book-making techniques foreshadow rich possibilities for future comparative studies that will help us better understand the all but lost tradition of Manichaean book art.





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¹⁷ For the transliteration and translation of the text by Werner Sundermann and Christiane Reck, see BeDuhn, "Middle Iranian and Turkic Texts", 243.

²² Nersessian, Gospel-Books 1987, 30, 84-5, and pl. 11. An additional example of an Eastern Christian Bible illuminated with fully painted sideways scenes in the collection of the British Library is Add 7174 from 1499. This Syriac manuscript was recently discussed by Balica-Witakowska, "Remarks".



¹⁸ See caption below for a full discussion of the iconography of this fragment.

¹⁹ The book was reconstructed in a study by Clark, "The Manichaean Turkic Pothi-Book."

²⁰ This scene consists of two registers. The lower third of the image shows two kneeling elects flanking an incense-burner. Their chins are raised, as if looking up towards the direction of their prayers. The upper twothirds, executed on a larger scale, shows an elect with

slightly bent upper body, as if looking down onto the realm below his. The elect is seated on his heels next to a low table underneath a flowering tree, from where his headgear is hanging. On the subject of the "New Paradise" as the place for the righteous elect after death, see Boyce, The Manichaean Hymn-Cycles, 15-23. 21 Leroy, Les Manuscripts Syriaques, 150 and Fig. 2.





5 Manichaean fragment

889-1015 Kocho, ruin α Ink, pigments, and gold on paper H: 18.8 cm W: 29.2 cm Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, MIK III 8259 LeCoq, Die manichäischen Miniaturen, Taf. 7b, book painting only; Sundermann, Iranian Manichaean Turfan Texts, pl. 159 a, b; Gulácsi, Manichaean Art, fig. 28

6 Manichaean fragment

Mid 8th-early 11th century Kocho, unspecified site Ink and pigments on paper H: 13.4 cm W: 7.8 cm Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, MIK III 4974 LeCoq, Die manichäischen Miniature, Taf. 7a, recto only; Sundermann, Iranian Manichaean Turfan Texts, pl. 152, 153; and Gulácsi, Manichaean Art, fig. 36

7 Manichaean textile page

Mid 8th-early 11th century Kocho, ruin a Ink, pigments, and a gold dot on silk (a) H: 7.4 cm w: 6 cm (illustrated) (d) H: 7.2 cm W: 6 cm Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, MIK III 4981 a&d LeCoq, Die manichäischen Miniature, Taf. 4b, fragment a only;

Sundermann, Iranian Manichaean Turfan Texts, pl. 156a; and

8 Manichaean pothi

Gulácsi, Manichaean Art, fig. 75

Mid 8th - early 11th century Murtuk, unspecified site Ink and pigments on paper H: 6 cm W: 21.5 cm Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, MIK III 8260 LeCoq, Die manichäischen Miniature, Taf. 7c, recto only; and Gulácsi, Manichaean Art, fig. 69

9 Bishop Abba in a Syriac Bible

Monastery Deir es-Suriani Parchment, 70 folios H: 26 cm W: 17 cm The British Library, Add. 14594 Leroy, Les Manuscrits Syriaques, 420.

10 Armenian Bible

Copied by the scribe Astuacatur in 1317 and deposited in the church at the Holy Astuacacin at Karbi. Last owner, archdeacon Sargis and his brother, renewed and rebound it and presented it to the church of St Sargis. Glazed paper, 251 ff., excluding 2 vellum fly-leaves. H: 24 cm W: 32 cm The British Library, Or. 2680 Nersessian, Gospel-Books, pl. 11-12.

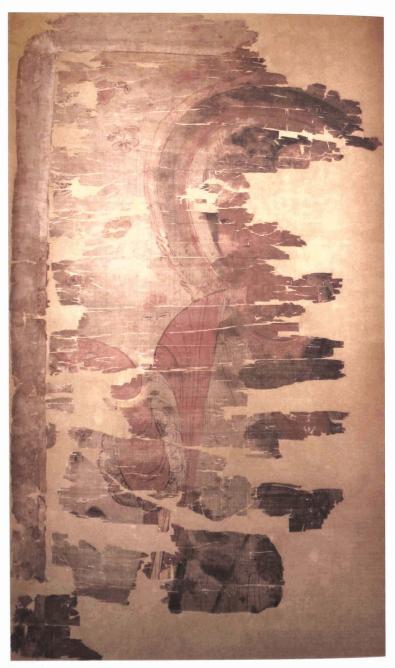
11 Fragment of a unidentified Christian saint

9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and pigments on silk H: 88 cm W: 55 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.48 (Ch.xlix.001) Stein, Serindia, 1050-1; Artibus Asiae, pl. 1; Waley, Paintings, 48; Whitfield, Art 1: 25, fig. 76; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, no. 8.

Christianity was brought to Sogdiana and the Eastern Silk Road by followers of Nestorius, a Syrian bishop who had been appointed Patriarch of Byzantium in 428. He supported the diophysite position - that Christ was both human and divine - in opposition to the monophysites, who argued that Christ was purely divine. In 431 the Council of Epheseus denounced the diophysites as heretics and Nestorius was banished. The Church split and the Church of the East, based in Ctesiphon, capital of the Sasanian Empire, adopted the diophysite position in defiance of the Byzantium Church. Sogdian traders came into contact with the Nestorians and Persian Nestorians travelled east. By 650 a Nestorian Christianity was established on the Eastern Silk Road with archbishoprics at both Samarkand and Kashgar - east beyond the Pamirs - and over twenty bishops east of the Oxus River.

This painting, found in the Library Cave at Dunhuang, was originally identified by Stein as an unidentified bodhisattva but he noted that this was the only instance of a blue-eyed bodhisattva and also remarked on the Maltese cross in his headdress. Waley saw the second Maltese cross on the breast and suggested that this was originally painted as a Christian saint but was being used at the Buddhist caves at Dunhuang as a bodhisattva. Whitfield concurred.

The cross is a fairly unambiguous Christian icon but other iconographical features were often shared between different Silk Road faiths, making it difficult to reach a definite identification of paintings by iconography alone (see cat. 244). Cats. 245-46 show the Christian adoption in Western Europe of what seems to have originally been a Buddhist image.



12a and b Pedlars

Tang dynasty (618–907)
China: acquired by the Museum
from George Eumorfopoulos
Earthenware with traces of
pigment
H: 25 cm
The British Museum,
1936, 1012.56
Hobson, The George Eumorfopoulos Collection,
1: pl. 35, no. 196: Hobson and Heatherington,
The Art, pl. 17.

c.650–750 China: bequeathed to the Museum by Brenda Zara Seligman Earthenware with traces of pigment H: 23.5 cm The British Museum, 1973, 726.192

Ayers, The Seligman Collection, pl. 15; Oriental Ceramic Society, Arts, pl. 6.

Ceramic Society, Arts, pl. 6.

The use of Chinese tomb figurines such as these reached its height in the first half of the Tang dynasty and numerous similar figurines are found in collections worldwide. The number, size and quality of figurines gave status to the deceased, as well as providing protection: some tombs contained hundreds. Non-Chinese were routinely included among the groups of figures, reflecting the cosmopolitan flavour of daily life at this time. As in reality, the tomb figurines of merchants, entertainers, camel drivers, grooms, and other servants were foreigners. The high proportion of non-Chinese among the tomb figurines coincided with the period of China's greatest political and military strength on the Eastern Silk Road.1

The two figures here represent pedlars, bent forward under the weight of their goods. They have very similar bodies and poses, each holding his strapped pack with his right hand and carrying a jug in his left. The jug carried by a similar figure in the Musée Guimet bears traces of gold pigments suggesting it

represented a fine ewer worked by Sogdian goldsmiths.² The figures wear the same kneelength belted coat, opening at the side, typical Silk Road costume. One wears a Chinese-style hat and looks straight ahead. The other wears a pyramid-shaped, peaked cap and looks down. Both have beards and individualised, realistic features.⁵

The pedlars illustrate well the method of production of unglazed earthenware figurines. The parts were mass produced in moulds, then luted together and painted. Different heads on the same body, or a head put on at a different angle, resulted in individual characters. Although mass produced, great care was taken to show liveliness and motion in the figurines, as well as distinct features among types. Identifiable groups include Sogdians, Armenians, Uighurs, Turks, Tocharians and Khotanese.

- 1 Watson, Arts of China, 232.
- 2 Desroches, Compagnons, 182,
- 3 Wahler, The Westerners, pl. 2. Wahler identifies these as Semitic features.



Buddhist Monks on the Silk Road (cats. 13-14)



13 Reports from a Chinese pilgrim

024 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper н: 28.2 cm w: 165 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.529 Giles, "Dated V", 329; Giles, Catalogue, no. 7383; Yingzang 2:7.

14 Letters of introduction for a Chinese pilgrim

9th or 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 286 cm w: 25 cm The British Library, IOL Tib J 754 Thomas, "Chinese Buddhist Pilgrim".

Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism and Nestorian Christianity were challenged in Sogdiana and along the whole of the Eastern Silk Road by Buddhism. Unlike these other faiths, Buddhism did not originate in the west but in India, to the south of Sogdiana. It travelled through Gandhara to Samarkand and to east of the Pamirs. Although it is not certain when the first Buddhist monks reached China, Buddhism was beginning to become established there by the third and fourth centuries. It was then that Chinese monks began to realize that they lacked many of the sacred texts of their religion. Among the early Chinese pilgrims was Faxian, who set off to India in 399 to collect scriptures, visit sacred sites and learn from Indian masters. By the early Chinese Tang dynasty (618-907), when most of the Silk Road was safely garrisoned by Chinese soldiers, many monks made the journey. The most famous was Xuanzang (596-664), who wrote a detailed account of his travels which later became the subject of a popular novel. These famous figures are only two among the many who attempted the journey; over fifty are mentioned in 'Further Biographies of Eminent Monks' compiled in China in the late seventh century.1 The two manuscripts displayed here are evidence of the journeys

of otherwise unknown pilgrims.

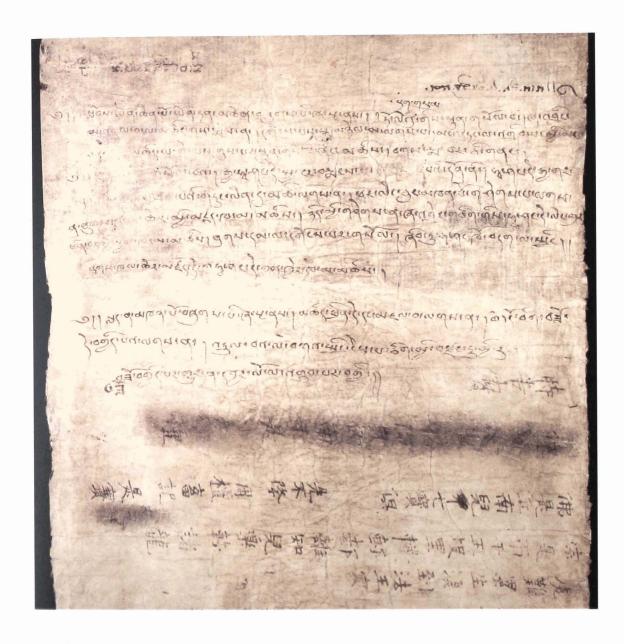
Xuanzang travelled without the proper permission and had to sneak across the border near the Jade Gate just east of Dunhuang under cover of darkness. Most monks, however, would have been sent by their monasteries or by imperial decree. Cat. 13 is a series of reports submitted by two monks who, having received imperial permission, were required to send reports on their progress. The monk Guiwen and his companion Dequan are not mentioned in other sources but both were from Kaiyuan Monastery and their reports are dated to the 5th and 6th months of the 2nd year of Tongguang [June-July 924]. By this time the Chinese Tang dynasty had collapsed and China was divided between northern and southern regimes. Guiwen speaks of arriving in Lingzhou on the 23rd of the 4th month, whereupon he purchased two camels in exchange for clothes. His fate is not recorded.

Cat. 14 records the journey of another monk. It contains several letters of introduction written by officials at each stage of the monk's journey, requesting the officials of the next town to help the monk and escort him on the next stage of his journey. Because the letters are written in Tibetan, the monk's journey probably took place during the Tibetan occupation of Eastern Central Asia in the mid-eighth to mid-ninth century, or

in the decades after the fall of the Tibetan empire when Tibetan was still in use as a lingua franca.

The pilgrim monk, whose name we do not know, is described in the letters as a great ascetic, scholar, and upholder of virtue. He came from the Buddhist site of Wutaishan, one of the holiest of China's Buddhist sites, thought to be the home of the bodhisattva Manjuśri. Wutaishan was itself a popular destination for pilgrims: we find the Chinese emperor presenting the Tibetans with maps of Wutaishan and a depiction of the mountain complex on the walls of cave 61 at Dunhuang. The text on the verso of cat. 13 also contains notes on famous Buddhist mountain sites, starting with Wutaishan.

The letters in cat. 14 speak of the monk's desire to visit the great monastic university of Nālandā, the home of many of the most eminent Mahāyāna scholars and meditators, where Xuanzang stayed for several years. Like Xuanzang, this unnamed pilgrim also intended to visit the pilgrimage sites connected with the birth, life and death of the historical



buddha Śākyamuni. By the ninth and tenth centuries, Buddhism in India was in decline due to the revival of Hindu religious traditions and the incursions of Islamic invaders. Nālandā remained one of the few great

centres where Buddhism continued to thrive.

We know that this monk probably arrived at Dunhuang, where this scroll was found but, as with the two monks mentioned in the other manuscript, no evidence remains of what became of him afterwards. These monks may not have survived the long overland journey to India, or may have reached India but never returned to their homeland.



15 An itinerant storyteller

Late 9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and pigments on paper H: 41.0 cm W: 29.8 cm The British Museum. 1919,0101,0.168 (Ch.00380)

Stein, Serindia, 994; Stein, Thousand Buddhas, pl. 33; Waley, Paintings, cat. 168; Matsumoto, Tonko-ga, figs. 148a; Whitfield, Art, 2: 59; Mair, "Origins", pl. 1; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, no. 61; Nara, Sanzō hōshi, no. 200.

This and several similar paintings showing a monk with a back pack full of scrolls, a staff and a tiger, have been the subject of several studies and later images were usually identified as the famous Chinese pilgrim monk Xuanzang or the arhat Dharmatrata. Mair has instead suggested that the figure depicted is a travelling storyteller and that the scrolls are illustrations for his public recitations. He argues that such performers would have been frequent travellers on the Silk Road, going from town to town to give public recitations of popular Buddhist tales.

16 Shoe

8th-9th century Stein, 2nd expedition, Mazar-tagh Woollen felt with leather patches The British Museum, MAS 495 (M.Tagh.a.0041)

Stein, Serindia, 1288, 1293; Whitfield, Art, 3: 84; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, no. 141.

Strong and warm shoes were needed for desert life and travel in the winter. This is one of several found by Stein at Mazar-tagh, a Tibetan military site north of Khotan. It is made from wool stitched into a design of overlapping scales. The sole, which turns up at the toe, heel and side, is also made from stitched felt with leather patches at heel and toe. Inside are two fragments of red woollen cloth, plain and diagonal weave.

Wool and felt were products of Khotan. Many shoes were found in ancient sites along the Eastern Silk Road, including delicate embroidered ladies shoes (cats. 182, 183), others with elaborate curled toes (cat. 288) and several rope sandals for summer wear, similar to those worn by the storyteller (cat. 15).





17 Tribute horses and camels

10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and pigment on paper H: 29.7 cm W: 200.7 cm The National Museum, New Delhi, 2003/17/343 (Ch.00388) Stein, Serindia, 996; Waley, Paintings, No. 368

Camels were the consummate travellers of the Silk Road. Sogdiana marks the watershed between the single-humped camel of the Western Silk Road and the double-humped camel of the Eastern Silk Road.1 The latter is larger and grows a thick winter coat to cope with the chill of desert nights. Camels can survive for a fortnight after a long drink without additional water and are also able, according to many, to predict the desert winds. Camels however were slow and used mainly for carrying loads. Horses were the preferred mount, but were much more vulnerable to the harsh desert conditions.

This rough line sketch with some green on the saddles and red pigment is very similar to another found in Cave 17 at Dunhuang (cat. 153) and they probably belong together. The horses, camels and grooms are all well depicted apart from the fourth animal in line. The sketch is made from five panels of paper pasted together. According to Stein and Waley the fifth panel with the horse was originally incomplete and pasted on upside down. There is another sheet on the verso of this fifth panel with large Chinese writing which is probably a continuation of the text on the verso of cat. 153. This text is dated to 966 and Whitfield suggests it postdates the images, as the scribe practised some lines on the image side of the paper which is on top of the drawing. The dating of this piece is based on the probability that it belongs with cat. 153 although the text has not been seen.



18 Funeral address to a donkey

7th-10th century Stein, 2nd expedition, Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 28.6 cm w: 68.6 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.1477 Giles, Catalogue, no. 6643; Yingzang 3:79; Eliasberg, "Funéraires animales", 127-30, 142-3.

Donkeys were used throughout the Silk Road as beasts of burden, cart pullers or mounts and, although not as expensive as camels or horses, their worth was recognized as shown by this manuscript, a funeral address to a dead donkey.



19 Camel with monkey

c.664 Excavated in 1972 from Zheng Rentai's tomb (d. 664), Liquan County, Shaanxi Province, China Pottery with pigments H: 43 cm W: 44 cm Shaanxi History Museum, Xian,

This tomb model shows how camels were loaded with goods for Silk Road travel.1 First a blanket or saddlecloth was fitted around the two humps. Two slightly curved slatted panels of wood, part of the moveable panels of the traditional nomadic tent, were fixed on either side. The large round saddlebags were filled with goods and, on top of these are rolls

> of silk (a common Silk Road currency: see cat. 41), pots, a ladle, a pheasant and a rabbit on one side and, on the other, a knife scabbard, sword and sheath for arrows. A small monkey perches at the back.

1 For more information see Knauer, The Camel's Load and The Guimet Museum's Chinese Camel

¹ See Bulliet, The Camel, especially chapter 6 on a discussion between the one-humped and two-humped camel, domestication and interbreeding.

Stein and the Silk Road (cats, 20-21)

For strategic reasons, its trade and abundance of natural and manufactured products, Central Asia has always been of interest to the great empires of the world. In the period covered here these included the Arabs, Turks, Tibetans and Chinese. In the nineteenth century the Russians and British vied for influence among the local emirs. And with the Caspian pipeline promising an alternative to Middle Eastern oil, the Americans have become aware of the importance of this region in the twenty-first century.

> By the late nineteenth to early twentieth century after a thaw in relations between the Russians and British and reassertion of Chinese control following the short-lived rule of the Turkic Yakub Beg, the Eastern Silk Road was stable enough for the explorers and archaeologists. They too were looking for treasures. For the Swedish explorer, Sven Hedin, the treasure lay in travelling previously unsurveyed and dangerous desert expanses. He noted ancient sites but did not stop to excavate with any thoroughness. For the Hungarian, Marc Aurel Stein, the goal was to discover forgotten civilizations which exemplified the cultural diversity of the Silk Road in its heyday in the first millennium. Rivalries between old and emerging empires did not cease with the archaeologists: when applying for funding to the British Government in India Stein played on the fact that he was their representative (he had applied for British nationality before embarking on his first expedition) and made clear he was in a race with others to reach the ancient sites. These others included expeditions funded by the Russians, Prussians, French and Japanese.

> Between 1900 and 1930 Stein carried out four major expeditions to the Eastern Silk Road (followed by four to the Western Silk Road). Most of the exhibits shown here are from the first three of these (his fourth expedition was cut short and his finds confiscated by the Chinese authorities).

Stein was a meticulous record-keeper and took notebooks and field diaries to record all aspects of his expeditions, including observations on local names and customs (as seen on the left-hand page of cat. 20), accounts (he had to submit detailed expense accounts to

his funders, in this case the Indian Government, on his return), and sketches and notes of sites and their artefacts. Cat. 20 is a notebook from the start of his first Silk Road expedition (1900-01) covering the period July 1900 to January 1901, and the right-hand page shows the major sites he intended to visit and his estimate of the distances between them - 4075 miles or 6520 km in total.

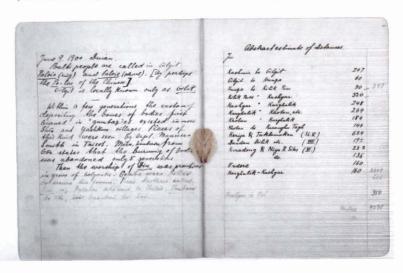
Stein's record-keeping has been invaluable for the study of the sites he explored and the excavated artefacts. When he arrived at a new archaeological site he surveyed the area and the site itself drawing a clear plan to scale of the major remains. He excavated each area in turn making sure to note the layers at which



Fig. 7 Stein at his plane table surveying the Taklamakan, on his 3rd expedition, 7 March, 1915 The British Library, Photo 392/28(739)

20 Stein's notebook from his first Silk Road expedition

June 9, 1900 Ink on paper H: 23 cm W: 34.5 cm (open) p:9 cm The Bodleian Library, MSS Stein 192 ff.3V-4R



artefacts and manuscripts were uncovered and making note of every find, however small or fragmentary. This was not common practice of the time: Flinders Petric's groundbreaking work, *Methods and Aims in Archaeology*, did not appear until 1904, but Petric had sifted every shovel of soil for finds on his excavation of the Pyramid of Giza between 1880–3 and then used the new method of stratigraphic study in his 1890 excavation of Tel-Hasi in Palestine. Stein would have read about these new methods, and also of Schliemann's stratigraphic excavation of Troy in the early 1870s.

Stein assigned each find a unique identifier which was usually written in pen on the find itself. So, for example, cat. 14 has the identifier 'M. Tagh. a. 0041.' 'M. Tagh.' is Stein's shortened form of a Tibetan fort site north of Khotan: Mazar-tagh. The 'a.' indicates refuse heaps below the fort and '0041' indicates that this was the forty-first object numbered from this area. Scholars are thus able to identify the exact provenance of the vast majority of Stein's finds and to refer back to his expedition reports to read of the circumstances of the find. This helps enormously in understanding the artefacts, their context and in dating them.

Although archaeology and scholarship were the main aims of Stein's expeditions, exploration and surveying were also vital and important activities. Stein was always extremely careful to plan well so as to avoid putting his men or animals in danger. On his second expedition (1906–8) he decided to cross the Taklamakan Desert from north to south rather than make the safer – but far longer – route around the desert in order to give him additional excavation time at sites near Khotan. The crossing was not without hazards and its success relied on Stein's

ability to navigate to the point where the Keriya river flowing northwards from the Kunlun disappeared into the sands of the Taklamakan. He used Hedin's maps but these had been surveyed over a decade previously and rivers running through the Taklamakan sands often change their course. Thanks largely to excellent planning and a cool head the crossing was successful, but in his letter to his great friend and regular correspondent, Percy Allen, shown here (cat. 21) Stein confides: 'It has been a hard march, this tramp of close on 200 miles over absolutely lifeless desert'. The letter, however, still underplays the hardships of this march and Stein's role in preventing a mutiny which would have resulted in the almost certain death of men and animals. Desert travel was no less hazardous for Stein than for many of his predecessors who tramped the Silk Road.

Further reading

See Hopkirk, Great Game, for the political rivalries of this period and his Foreign Devils for a lively introduction to the archaeological race and shennanigans. For an overview of Stein's and Hedin's work see Baumer, Southern Silk Road. Comprehensive hiographies of Stein have been written by both Mirsky and Walker, while Whitfield, Aurel Stein and the Silk Road, concentrates on Stein's expeditions. All of these have hibliographies.

instalment, Thopse, to bell your details.

It has been a hard march, this hamp of close on 200 miles over aboute lifeless desert, & full of anxicles, boo. But everything the marches as well as I called thopse the whole of my carevan, men & aminals, welicking four power, has been brought through in safety. I wonder since hew many hindred to years this sear of closes that has been no such party. Things botted awkward at binds as highly ble pended on right steering I there were absolutely no landmarks to guide to the one sky mine bet much family although which might ultimable thing us to water held to the plain. We had to keep the lot the plain. We had to keep throught bouth, as well as we easy amoust on anders succession of

dunes, vicing offen he vidges of 150 ft. or whore the high knight the soldware freightened greatly our Mahyer when he hough prophe from near a tenna high road; but though well digging did not succeed at him eaufer to have got at water we want to have got at water. Her warrows about to lead nervous about to lead nervous about to deep to feel nervous about to delepaled Ma dam's buthlay in due spaint at one of the waterless campes was chekred next morning by getting a well sunk an acute to respect men it pomes, though the ground looked most unpromising. The real eares began when we struck the northern edge of the forbidding della-like region toper the Kerigh lives has buthed feel, in the sands since heaven known

21 Stein's letter to Percy Allen

February 16, 1908 from 'Camp Tonguz-basle, Keriya River'. Ink on paper H: 21.5 cm w: 26 cm The Bodleian Library, MSS Stein 5, ff.21v-228



KHOTAN:
A KINGDOM OF
REMARKABLE
DIVERSITY



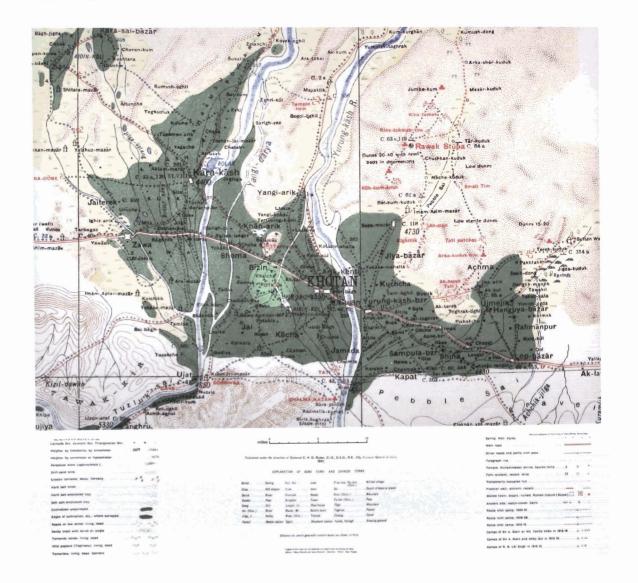
Fig. 8 Painting of the Khotanese princess who married the King of Dunhuang Cao Yuanlu in the tenth century, wearing an elaborate headdress and necklace of Khotanese jade.

Dunhuang, Cave 61

Courtey of the Dunhuang Academy

Yotkan, the site of the ancient capital of the Khotanese kingdom, lies some 10 km west of the present-town of Khotan in Xinjiang, China, on the southern edge of the Tarim Basin. A semi-autonomous city-state from at least the beginning of the first millennium, Khotan legends trace its origin back to Kunala, the eldest son of the great Indian king Aśoka, and to an exiled Chinese prince. The founding legends of Khotan are all linked with Buddhism (cats. 22–26) and the city's links with India and its thriving Buddhist society is attested by Chinese travellers who visited Khotan looking for Buddhist texts, such as the fourth-century Faxian and the seventh-century Xuanzang. The latter, who stayed in Khotan for seven months, reported over 100 monasteries with over 5000 monks and nuns.

Khotan came under Chinese influence when the Western Han dynasty (206 BC – AD 26) extended its influence into the Tarim Basin and established a garrison there around 73 BC to secure the Silk Road. Later, Chinese control was interrupted by the Hephthalites who passed through the area in the fifth century. The Tibetans ruled Khotan and other towns on the Southern Silk Road during their first empire in the eighth and ninth centuries, although Khotan retained its own king and officials. Khotanese soldiers served alongside Tibetans in the army (see Takeuchi's essay, pp. 50–56). Following the Tibetan withdrawal and the re-establishment of Chinese power, Khotan built good enough relations with the rulers in Dunhuang (Shazhou) to its east for monks and



'There are five large towns in the kingdom and many dozen smaller ones... the soil is favourable to all sorts of grain, mulberry and hemp. In the mountains there is much good jade. They also have excellent horses, camels, and mules. Under the law, murder alone is punishable by death.'

From Beishi, 659, quoted in Rémusat, Histoire, 19

merchants to shop and worship there (cat. 55) and Khotanese princesses to marry its king (fig. 8).

According to Chinese records dated to 1006, Khotan had by then been conquered by the Turkic Karakhanids. These relatively late converts to Islam had conquered Samarkand two decades before and then crossed the Pamirs to take Kashgar, probably shortly before 1000. Dunhuang, however, was spared this time. Buddhism was eventually replaced by Islam, although, when Marco Polo passed through in the late thirteenth century, he remarked on a community of Nestorian Christians in Khotan.

By the fifth to sixth centuries, the probable date of the oldest manuscripts, Khotan had a thriving paper industry, a skill it had acquired from the Chinese and which lasted until the early twentieth century. In addition, it produced silk and the town was full of mulberry trees to feed the worms.

A Khotanese legend tells the story of how silk production began. In earlier days, Xuanzang says, only the eastern countries — China — had silk worms. The king of Khotan, however, thought of a plan. He married a Chinese princess and when she was ready to travel to Khotan the king warned her that since his kingdom had no silk worms she must bring her own if she wanted to continue wearing fine silk garments. The scheme succeeded: the princess hid mulberry leaves and silk worms in her headdress and the border guards, who were especially instructed to watch out for smugglers, did not dare to search a member of the imperial family. Thus Khotan was able to start producing its own silk. Khotan was also well-known for its wool and rugs (cats. 43, 51).

Above all, however, Khotan was famous for jade brought down as river boulders in the Yurung-kash and Kara-kash (see Michaelson's essay, pp 43-49 and cat. 49). Revered since ancient times by the Chinese for its hardness, beauty, and durability, jade was in constant demand

'Their written characters resemble the Indian model; the forms have been somewhat modified, the differences, however, are slight. The spoken language differs from that of other territories.'

Xuanzang 644 (Stein, Ancient Khotan, 174)

Fig. 9 Map of Khotan and Yotkan in the early twentieth century as surveyed by Stein and his surveyors, Ram Singh and Lal Singh, during the first three Silk Road expeditions between 1900 and 1915. Chinex Turketan and Kansu, Serial No. 32. 1500,000. Survey of India 1981.

and was probably what first made Khotan an important trading stop on the Southern Silk Road. Trade exposed Khotan to diverse influences and the art, manuscripts, artefacts, and coins found at its various sites, most of them now buried in the desert sands, reveal the result of a rich mix of cultures. This was what made Sir Aurel Stein choose Khotan as the target for his first Silk Road expedition in 1900.

Stein was the first to excavate at Yotkan although locals had retrieved numerous artefacts – mainly terracottas – from the site before him. The site was water-logged, which is probably the reason why no organic materials, including manuscripts, were found. Terracottas continued to be dug out and sold to foreigners passing through (cats. 29–33. 89, 93).

Manuscripts formed a major part of the material discovered at other sites in Khotan, comprising Buddhist texts, private letters, economic documents, etc. on paper and wood. From 1895 these were sent, by way of Kashgar, to Rudolf Hoernle and other expert linguists for

'In the middle of the garden, under the susurrant mulberry trees, stood a pavilion without walls which looked exactly like a bandstand. In this we were lodged; there was a minimum of privacy and a maximum of flies, but at least it was cool. Tea and sugar, sweets and bread. Foreseen questions and familiar answers. But we had reached Khotan, and if it did not feel as stimulating as the headquarters of a rebel army in Central Asia might be expected to feel, it was incontestably a major milestone in our journey.'

Peter Fleming 1935, (News from Tartary, 295–96)

decipherment. Many were in Sanskrit, but a large proportion, although written in a known script (Southern Brāhmī) proved to be in a hitherto unknown language. By 1901, Hoernle had recognized that the language of some of the documents was 'an Indo-Iranian dialect, having affinities both with Persian and the Indian Vernaculars.' After this, study of this language – named Khotanese – proceeded steadily through the contributions of scholars such as Ernst Leumann and Sten Konow, and, by 1916, its nature was well established thanks to two manuscripts discovered by Stein, one of them containing the Khotanese translation of the Diamond Sutra. The Khotanese language continued to be used until after the Karakhanid conquest when it was, in time, replaced by Turkic, the main language of the region today.

Some of the documents forwarded to Hoernle from Kashgar proved unexpectedly resistant to decipherment, however, and came under suspicion of being forgeries. These were all traced eventually to a certain Islam Akhun of Khotan. Stein therefore interrogated him in 1901 and extracted a full confession. To satisfy the British and Russian thirst for new material without the inconvenience of travelling to remote desert sites, Islam Akhun and his colleagues had fabricated many examples of manuscripts and block-printed books in strange scripts which they had buried in the sand and passed off as genuine antiquities.

The Founding and Protection of Khotan (cats. 22–26)

22 Vaiśravaņa: Guardian of the North

9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and pigments on silk H: 50.5 cm w: 17.5 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.138

Stein, Serindia, 1066, pl. 85; Waley, Paintings. no. 138; Whitfield, Art, 1: 65; Farrer and Whitfield, Caves, no. 44.

23 Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish

c.500 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Ink on paper H: 26 cm w: 539 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.3693 Giles, Catalogue, no. 4340

24 On the Guardian Gods of Khotan

896 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 31.5 cm w: 472 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.2113 v Waley, Paintings, 84; Giles, "Dated III", 1043; Giles, Catalogue, no. 5553; Soper, "Representations", 349-64; Williams "Khotanese Painting", 125–9; Soymie, Zhang and Rong, "Ruixiangji", 78–84; *Yingzang* 4:6; Zhang and Rong, *Yutianshi*, 291.

25 Miraculous protection of Khotan

10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 30 cm W: 21 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.5659 Giles, Catalogue, no.6722; Soymie, "statues miraculeuses", 82-102; Zhang and Rong, Yutianshi, 76-7; Yingzang 9: 46.

26 Legend of the Rat King

c.6th century Stein, 1st expedition: Dandan-Uiliq Ink and pigments on wood н: 10.6 ст w: 44.8 ст The British Museum, 1907,1111.68

Stein, Ancient Khotan, Whitfield, Art, 3: 68; Williams, "Khotanese Painting", 152-53; Kumagai, "Saiiki no bijutsu", 102.







In Buddhist iconography there are Guardian Kings for the four directions. Vaiśravana, Guardian of the North and chief of the four kings is 'He who is knowing' and, although depicted throughout the Silk Road, he is particularly associated with the founding of Khotan. As Stein notes,1 Xuanzang's Xiyuji tells of the Khotanese king's claim to descend from Vaiśravana. The founding king, the legend tells, was without an heir and so he prayed at the Vaiśravana Temple. A baby boy emerged from the statue's head. When the baby would not eat and the king prayed again, a breast emerged from the earth in front of the statue from which the baby suckled and grew strong. A new temple was raised to Vaiśravaņa and Xuanzang noted that this was the reason why the god's temple to this day is full of rare and precious objects and is visited constantly to receive worship and offerings. Khotan lies north of the birthplace of Buddha and the heartland of Buddhism.

In Indian iconography Vaiśravaņa's symbols are the flag, the Buddhist jewel and the mongoose. In China he became associated with wealth and the mongoose was replaced by a snake. By the time he reached Japan he was often worshipped separately and was associated with healing powers. The painting here (cat. 22) shows the king with a miniature stupa in his right hand and a halberd in his left. Like all Guardian Kings, Vaiśravana's power is indicated not only by his armour, weapons and warrior-like stance, but also by the subjugated demon or yaksa crushed beneath him. In his Indian Hindu form, Vaiśravana was Kubera, God of Wealth and King of the Demons who lived in the Himalayas with his demon army.

Khotan's founding legend talks of an original population comprised of both Indians and Chinese and like most legends, is probably a distorted echo of the historical truth. Similarly for the story behind the text reproduced in cat. 23, the Xianyujing or Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish. The sutra comprises jātaka (stories of Buddha's life in his previous incarnations) which, legend says, were told to Chinese monks in Khotan. There is no extant Khotanese or Sanskrit original for this sutra but the story reflects the transmission of Buddhism from India to centres such as Khotan where it became established. and thence moved on east to China, Korea and Japan. This sutra was later translated into Tibetan and then into Mongolian as A Sea of Narratives (Uliger-un dalai).

Similarly, the guardian gods discussed in cats. 24 and 25, also reflect this Indian influence and transmission of Buddhism, listing the Buddhist protectors of Khotan: Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Both are documents in Chinese found at Dunhuang and cat. 24 is dated to 896 by the following text (which records the erection of a new building at the Dunhuang cave site). This was a period when links between Khotan and the neighbouring kingdom of Dunhuang to its east were particularly strong, with a marriage alliance between the king of Dunhuang, Cao Yuanlu and a Khotanese princess (see fig. 8).

The protectors of Khotan were not only gods from the Buddhist pantheon. One legend recounted by Xuanzang tells how the King of Khotan prayed to the desert rats to help him defeat the Xiongnu who were preparing for battle the next morning. Overnight the rats gnawed through the bridles and trappings of



25

the Xiongnu's mounts making it impossible for them to go into battle.¹ A shrine was built to the rats west of Khotan. Stein speculated that Kaptar-Mazar — a shrine to pigeons — was the site of this ancient shrine and identified the animal-headed figure on a votive wooden plaque found at Dandan-Uiliq north of Khotan (cat. 26) as the rat king. Williams pointed out that the face is too damaged to confirm this identification and suggested it may equally show a wolf-headed figure, as depicted on other images, and be one of the spirits protecting the health of children. The reverse of the plaque is painted with five seated Buddhas.

1 Stein notes that the story is similar to that told by Herodotus of the destruction of Sennacherib's Assyrian host on the borders of Egypt (Ancient Khotan, 120) and also a later Chinese legend of Buddhist protection against Arab besiegers (see cat. 97).



Khotan in the Third to Fourth centuries (cats. 27, 28)



27 Gift of horse to the King of Khotan

3rd to 4th century Stein, 1st expedition: Niya Ink on wood H: 4.5 cm W: 24.3 cm The British Library, Or.8211/1483 (N.xv.3)

Stein, Ancient Khotan, 299; Boyer et. al. Inscriptions, no. 214: Burrow, Translation, no.

28 Document concerning the sale of a camel

3rd to 4th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Endere Ink on wood H' 12 2 CM W: 21 2 CM The National Museum, New Delhi, 2003/16/227 (E.vi.ii.1)

Stein, Serindia, 291, pl. 38; Boyer et. al. Inscriptions, no. 661, pl. 12: Burrow Translation, no. 661; Emmerick, Guide, 2-3; Noble, "Kharosthi Inscription", 445-55.



There is no written documentation for the history of Khotan during this early period from Khotan itself, but a certain amount of information can be found in the Gandhari documents discovered at Niya and the other oases of Kroraina. These date from the second half of the third century AD and are written in Kharosthī script on wooden tablets and leather. They consist of letters, legal documents and administrative records. Frequent references to Khotan and the Khotanese suggest that, already by the third century AD, there must have been a long-established connection between the Iranian inhabitants of Khotan and the neighbouring kingdom of Kroraina. While envoys and embassies - in one case the Queen herself - were frequently sent to Khotan on missions bearing gifts, relations were not always friendly. The Khotanese

are recorded making cavalry attacks and plundering Krorainic territory, while some Khotanese fled to Kroraina as fugitives even at the cost of becoming slaves.

Cat. 27, a document excavated at Niya (from a 'consolidated mass of refuse forming a bank close on 4 ft. thick... Its odours were still distinctly pungent and trying after so many centuries')2 concerns a horse to be taken on a mission as a gift for the King of Khotan. It specifies the amounts of meal and aspista (Iranian word for 'lucerne') required for the journey as far as Khema. Khema occurs frequently in the Khotanese documents of the eighth century as Phema,3 and was probably located in the Keriya valley.

The wooden tablet shown in cat. 28 provides the first written evidence that the Khotanese were Iranians. It is dated in the

regnal year of Vijida Simha 'the Great King of Khotan, King of Kings' and concerns the sale of a camel for 8000 masa by Khvarnarse to Vagita Vadhaga: 'From now on this camel has become the property of Vagita Vadhaga, to do as he likes with it, to do everything he likes. Whoever at a future time complains, informs, or raises a dispute about this camel, for that he shall so pay the penalty as the law of the kingdom demands. By me Bahudhiva this document (?) was written at the request of Khvarnarse.'

The king's name Vijida Simha is attested again in the eighth century in the Khotanese form Viśya Sīhya, and the Tibetan form Bijaya Simha is found in the Prophecy of the Li country (i.e. Khotan), also probably from the eighth century. In the tenth century the title of the royal family of Khotan was still Viśa' a later form of Vijida. Another of the titles preserved in this document, hinaiha, is the Khotanese word for general, found in the Khotanese translation of the Buddhist Sutra of Golden Light as hīnāysa, where it translates Sanskrit senāpati as 'general.'

The purchaser Vagita Vadhaga, is described in the document as suliga 'Sogdian'. His name is almost certainly Sogdian (*βγysty-βntk 'slave of the gods'),4 as is the name of one of the witnesses Nani Vadhaga (nny-Bntk 'slave of Nanai').5

The handwriting and orthography of this document differ from those of the Kharosthī documents found at Niya.6 Although it was discovered at Endere, it may well have been written in Khotan and carried to Endere as proof of purchase by the Sogdian buyer Vagita Vadhaga.

IISW

- Burrow, Translation, no. 637.
- 2 Stein, Ancient Khotan, 340-41.
- Skjærvø, Khotanese, lxxvi; Brough, "Comments", 593. Since the measure specified is 10 jars each from Endere (ancient Saca) to Niya (Remena/Cadota), and 15 from Niya to Khema, the distance from Cadota to Khema as measured in fodder - was about half again as far as the distance from Saca to Remena. This would localize Khema in the vicinity of the Keriya valley. For the identifications of ancient place-names, cf. Brough, ibid.; Hulsewé, China in Central Asia, pp. 94-95, n. 138, and Rhie, Early Buddhist Art, 318.
- 4 Grenet, Sims-Williams, de la Vaissière, "The Sogdian Ancient letter V", 102, n. 3
- Nanai-Vandak was also the name of the Sogdian merchant mentioned in Or.8212/95 a Sogdian letter written AD c.313.
- 6 Noble, "Kharosthi Inscription", 445.

Terracottas of Yotkan (cats. 29-33, 89, 93)

29a-k Monkeys

3rd to 6th century Stein, 1st and 2nd expeditions: Yotkan (29k: Donated by the British Collection of Central Asian Antiquities; Yotkan (Collected by A. F. R. Hoernle)) Terracotta н: 1.8-4.5 ст The British Museum, a: 1907,1111. 38 (Y.0025); b: 1907,1111.30 (Y.0011.k); c: MAS 116 (Yo.0051.c); d: MAS 78 (Yo. 0032.c); e: MAS 84 (Yo.0034.d.); f: MAS 18 (Yo.003.g.); g: MAS 79 (Yo.0032.d); h: MAS 19 (Yo.003.h); i: MAS 135 (Yo.181); j: MAS 80 (Yo.oo32.e); k: 1902,1220.517; Stein, Ancient Khotan, 213, 217, pl. 47; Serindia pl. nn; Whitfield, Art, 3: fig. 103;

























30 Small jug with monkey on handle

3rd to 6th century Stein, 1st expedition: Yotkan Terracotta with applied decoration н: 10.6 cm w: 9.0 cm The British Museum, 1907,1111.39 (Y.0028) Stein, Ancient Khotan, 207, 217, pl. 43; Whitfield, Art, 3: 81; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, no. 139.

31a-d Monster heads

3rd to 6th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Yotkan Terracotta н: 3.4-3.6 ст The British Museum, MAS 12 (Yo.001.0); MAS 14 (Yo.001.u); MAS 57 (Yo.0024.a); MAS 58 (Yo.0024.n) Stein, Serindia, ; Whitfield, Art,



32 Pilgrim's water bottle

3rd to 7th century Stein, 3rd expedition: Yotkan Terracotta with applied decoration H: 15.5 cm The National Museum, New Delhi, 2003/3/940 (Yo.01) Stein, Innermost Asia, 101, pl. 1



33a & b Terracotta boar and ox

3rd to 6th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Yotkan Terracotta a) H: 4.2 cm; b) L: 9.5 cm The British Museum, MAS 126 (Yo.0064) & MAS 52 (Yo.0023.a) Stein, Serindia, pls. 2, 3; Whitfield, Art, 3:

fig.102 & no. 76











Terracottas from the region of Khotan have been well known since the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century when they were collected by European scholars. As a result there are collections of terracottas and minor antiquities (including bronzes, seals, gems and semi-precious objects) in various museums of the world, including the British Museum, London, the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, the Musée Guimet, Paris, the State Hermitage, St. Petersburg, the National Museum, New Delhi, and the National Museum, Seoul. The British collections are mainly those of A.F. Rudolf Hoernle and Aurel Stein. While the objects in the Hoernle collection were largely put together by George Macartney in Kashgar,1 the Stein collection was gathered by the explorer from around the village of Yotkan in the Borazan region of Khotan which was identified with the ancient capital of the kingdom of Khotan (see fig. 10).2 Most of the terracottas seem to have been surface finds and not found within excavated contexts. Today the Hoernle collection is divided between the British Museum, London, and the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford,3 while the Stein collection is divided between the British Museum4 and the National Museum, New Delhi. Most of the terracottas on display at the exhibition come from the Stein and Hoernle collections of the British Museum, with one object from the Stein collection in New Delhi.

The nature and function of these Khotanese terracottas have puzzled scholars for decades since most of them were found in fragments with very few intact examples scattered among the various collections. Animal figurines dominate most collections, and particularly typical of Khotan are the tiny monkey figurines. As demonstrated by this exhibition, the monkeys are modelled in miniature with a great deal of attention being paid to the depiction of their expressions and poses (cats. 29a-k). Their human-like postures led Stein to speculate that the monkeys were made to imitate human emotions in an obviously popular caricature of the Khotanese public. According to him. this might explain the monkeys playing instruments or showing ithyphallic or amorous poses.5 The depiction of so many monkeys and the fact that many are depicted masturbating (cat. 29a) or in erotic embraces (cat, 29k) are difficult to comprehend, though it has been suggested that they might have fulfilled some amuletic purpose.6 In India, roughly modelled terracotta monkey figurines have been found at many Gangetic valley archaeological sites, such as at Kaushambi, Ahichchhatra, Atranjikhera, and Shaikhan Dheri at Kushan period levels.7 Moreover, they have

Fig. 10 Stein's plan from Ancient Khotan showing his route between Yotkan and Khotan during his first expedition.

Stein, Ancient Khotan, pl. 23.

occasionally been portrayed as musicians as well.* In Uzbekistan, at sites such as Zar Tepe, monkey figurines have also been found at Kushan and late Kushan levels. However, the date and purpose of the Khotanese monkeys still remain matters of speculation though the charming little vase with the applied figure of a monkey playing a lute with its tail forming the handle suggests one type of usage (cat. 30).

Besides monkeys, many other animals have also been depicted in Khotanese terracottas, such as the double-humped camels in the present exhibition (cats. 92a-d). Though they lack the humour of the monkeys, they are also small and quite finely modelled with etched marks to indicate body hair and simple punched eyes.

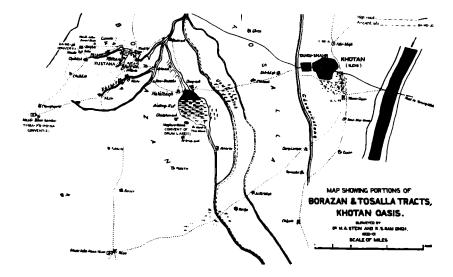
Many of the other terracottas were used as appliqué ornamentation on pottery vessels. Examples of this type of appliqué ornamentation includes the little boar (cat. 33a) as well as the grotesque face masks with pointed ears (cats. 31a-d). A relatively intact vessel from the Stein collection at the National Museum, New Delhi, highlights this fact by showing such faces appliquéd below the broken handles of a pottery amphora vessel from Yotkan (cat. 32). It is interesting to note in this regard that the type of moulded jewel motif applied all around this amphora can also be seen on stucco sculptures from sites such as Tumshuq and Fondukistan, giving us a relatively late date around the seventh century for this decorative feature. The pilgrim flask displayed provides us with another such complete example. Rounded flasks such as this were copies of leather bottles used by travellers which could be easily slung from a saddle. The little oxen-headed spout with its simple punched eyes (cat. 33b) like those on the terracotta camels, again illustrates the variety of pottery vessel types in use in Khotan.

Finally, the little terracotta female heads originally belonged to figurines (cats. 88a-c). There is an intact example from the Stein collection at the British Museum that shows a matronly woman cloaked in a long coat with hanging sleeves and with a beautifully arranged upswept coiffure at the back, holding a swaddled baby in her arms. Besides the elaborate hair styles, these terracotta female heads usually display facial tattoos. It is worth noting that facial tattoos are also found on some terracotta figurines from Afrasiab (Samarkand) of the early medieval period.

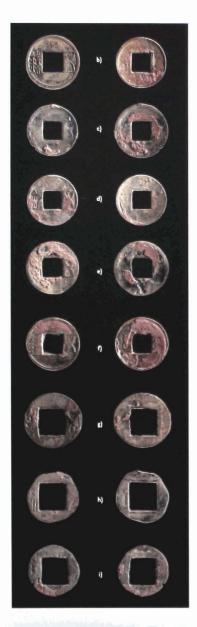
Thus the problem of dating these terracottas from Khotan still remains. As proposed above, a date for the animal figurines such as the monkeys and camels is possible between the third to sixth centuries but the terracotta vessel fragments need to be dated still later, perhaps around the seventh century. Such a date would also accord with the fact that one small terracotta head of a common Khotanese type10 was found at the excavations of Penjikent in Tajikistan in Sogdian levels."

MG

- 1 Hoernle, "A Report Pt.II".
- Stein, Ancient Khotan, 190-91.
- Harle and Topsfield, Indian Art, 26-28. The entire Hoernle collection at the Ashmolean Museum is to be published in a catalogue of the museum's Gandhāran and Central Asian Antiquities in 2005.
- Whitfield, Art, vol. 3, for notices on some of these objects.
- Stein, Serindia, 99.
- Miettinen in Mannerheim in Central Asia, 115-16.
- Kala, Terracottas in the Allahabad Museum, figs. 317, 318, 319, 320, 328.
- Pal, Iconsy, 55, no. 56.
- 9 MAS 3. See Stein, Scrindia, pl. 2, Yo.2 for the front and back of this figurine.
- to See, for example, 1902,1220,94 at the British Museum.
- 11 Drevnosti Tadjikistan 1985, 201, no. 503.



Coins from the First to Eighth Centuries (cats. 34-40)





35a Coin (drachm) issued by the Kushan king, Kanishka I (c.127-150)

Stein, 2nd expedition: Yotkan Copper Diameter: 1.7 cm Weight: 3.38 g The British Museum, Stein.S.IV.B.i.2

Stein, Serindia, 1341 Wang, Money.

34a-i Chinese wuzhu coins

c.1st-4th century Stein, 1st expedition: Rawak stupa Bronze Diameter: 1.7-2.5 cm Weight: a) 31.28 g b-i) 0.56-3.85 g The British Museum, a) Stein.AK.XIV.0.32-45 b-i) Stein.AK.XIV.o.27-31.a-d Stein, Ancient Khotan, 578; Wang, Money.

Stein found Chinese wuzhu coins corroded together like a) as though the coins had once been tied together by a string through the central holes. Another cluster b-i) when separated out consisted of Chinese wuzhu, clipped wuzhu and imitations and it was clear that these had been once been strung, and probably used, together.

35b Coin (drachm) issued by the Kushan king, Kanishka I (c.127-150)

Stein, 1st expedition: Yotkan Copper Diameter: 1.7 cm Weight: 3.68 g The British Museum, Stein.AK.III.h.1

Stein, Ancient Khotan, 576; Wang, Money.

35c Coin (hemidrachm) issued by the Kushan king, Kanishka I (c.127-150)

Stein, 1st expedition: Yotkan Copper Diameter: 1.4 cm Weight: 1.27 g The British Museum, Stein.AK.III.g.4 Stein, Ancient Khotan, 576; Wang, Money.

36a-d Sino-Kharosthī coins issued by the Khotanese king, Gurgamoya

c.30-60

a: Probably Khotan;

b & c: Stein, 1st expedition: Yotkan Copper

a) Diameter: 2.7 x 2.5 cm

Weight: 17.37 g

b) Diameter: 2.7 x 2.6 cm

Weight: 14.47 g

c) Diameter: 2.15 cm Weight 2.62 g

d) Diameter: 2.2 x 2.0 cm

Weight: 4.40 g The British Museum,

a) OR.6823

b) Stein.AK.III.a.1

c) Stein.AK.III.g.2

d) OR.0401

a & d) Cribb, "Coins of Khotan"; b & c) Stein, Ancient Khotan, 576; Cribb, "Coins of Khotan": Wang, Money.

36e Sino-Kharosthī coin (hemidrachm) issued by the Khotanese king, Panadosana

c.130-150 Stein, 1st expedition: Yotkan Bronze Diameter: 1.05 cm Weight: 1.11 g The British Museum, Stein, AK, II, a, 74

Stein, Ancient Khotan, 575; Cribb,; Wang, Money.

36f Sino-Kharosthī coin

c. 30-150 Stein, 1st expedition: Yotkan Diameter: 2.4 cm Weight: 5.45 g The British Museum, Stein.AK.II.a.4

Stein, Ancient Khotan, 575; Cribb, ; Wang, Money.



The Sino-Kharosthi coins of Khotan (also known as the 'horse coins of Khotan') are a unique series of coins issued by the kings of Khotan. They brought together the Kushan (cats. 35a-c) and Chinese currency systems (cats. 34a-i) and created a new coinage which could fit both systems. One side of the coin features a horse and a Kharosthī inscription naming the king of Khotan; the other side features a tamgha (tribal symbol) and a Chinese inscription stating the weight of the coin in 'grains' according to the Chinese system. So, for example, cats. 36a-b were inspired by the Kushan tetradrachm (four-drachm) coins and was equivalent to twenty-four grains in the Chinese currency system; cats. 36c-d were inspired by the Kushan drachm coin and was equivalent to six grains in the Chinese currency system; and cat. 36e represents the smallest of the Sino-Kharosthī coins being similar to the Kushan hemidrachm (halfdrachm) and equivalent to three grains in the Chinese currency system. Cat. 36d was overstruck on an early Kushan copper drachm of Kujula Kadphises, c. AD 30-80.

Cat. 36f was also created locally in the Khotan area. It followed the form of Chinese coins, with its hole in the centre and a two-'character' inscription. The inscription is bicultural, with the Chinese on the right and probably a tamgha, or tribal symbol, on the left. Both represent Khotan.

HW



37a Imitation Byzantine coin

5th to 6th century Stein, 3rd expedition: Astana Gold Diameter: 1.6 cm Weight: 0.85 g The British Museum. Stein.IA.XII.c.1

Stein, Innermost Asia, 994; Wang, Money.

This uniface imitation of a Byzantine coin was found in the mouth of the female occupant in Tomb Ast.i.6, in the Astana cemetery on the northern Silk Road near Turfan. The majority of Byzantine coins and imitations from Eastern Central Asia were found in contexts that suggest they served a non-monetary function.

HW

37b Coin (drachm) issued by the Sasanian ruler, Khusraw II (591-628)

618 Minted at AYL (probably Susa, southwestern Iran) Silver Diameter: 3.1 cm Weight: 4.28 g The British Museum, 1981,1-9.4

Sasanian coins were widely used in Gaochang, near Turfan. Part of the inscription, seen at the 4 o'clock position on the front of this coin, may have inspired the local inscription on the Sino-Kuchan coins (cat. 38a).



38a Sino-Kuchan coin

c.6th to 7th century Stein, 3rd expedition: Yulduzbagh, near Kucha Bronze Diameter: 2.0 cm Weight: 1.48 g The British Museum, Stein.IA.XV.c.18 Stein, Innermost Asia, 994; Wang, Money.

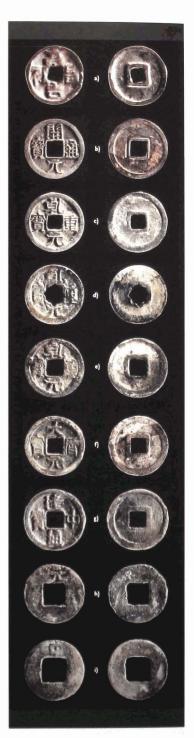
This bilingual coin was created and issued in the Qiuci kingdom, in modern-day Kucha (across the Taklamakan from Khotan). The Chinese inscription 'wuzhu' is visible to the right and left of the hole. The local Qiuci inscription is placed above and below the hole. The upper character may be associated with the inscription found on Sasanian coins.

38b Unidentified coin

Date uncertain Stein, 2nd expedition: Mazar-tagh Bronze Diameter: 1.6 cm Weight: 1.41 g The British Museum, Stein.S.XXX.d.5 Stein, Serindia, 1347; Wang, Money.

This coin is modelled on the Chinese coin. with its square hole and inscription at the four sides of the hole. The inscription has yet to be fully identified.

HW



HW

39a Gaochang jili coin

620s

Stein, 3rd expedition: Karakhoja (Gaochang) Bronze

Diameter: 2.55 cm Weight: 10.24 g The British Museum, Stein.IA.X.d.4 Stein. Innermost Asia. 993; Wang. Money.

Gaochang jili is a Chinese inscription meaning 'Gaochang, auspicious, advantage'. These coins were probably issued in the 620s to commemorate the restoration of the Qu clan to power in Gaochang.

HW

39b Kaiyuan tongbao coin

7th to 8th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Yarkhoto, Turfan Bronze Diameter: 2.5 mm Weight: 4.53 g The British Museum, Stein.S.XIX.a.76

Stein, Serindia, 1168; Wang, Money.

The Kaiyuan tongbao, issued from 621, marked the start of a new coinage system in central China. 'Kaiyuan' means 'New Beginning'. By 700 the Kaiyuan tongbao was in general use in Gaochang. Its influence spread throughout Eastern Central Asia, and local variations of

the Kaiyuan tongbao were created as far west as modern-day Uzbekistan.

39c-e Qianyuan zhongbao coins (large, medium and small)

Stein, 1st and 2nd expeditions: Yotkan Bronze Diameter: a) 2.9 cm b) 2.45 cm c) 2.15 cm

Weight: a) 6.72 g b) 2.8 g c) 2.63 g The British Museum, Stein.AK.II.a.13, Stein.S.IV.A.a.40,

Stein.S.IV.A.a.29

Stein, Ancient Khotan, 525; Stein, Serindia, 1346;

Wang, Moncy.

Qianyuan zhongbao coins were first issued in 758 in central China. The mint at Anxi (modern-day Kucha) soon began production of Qianyuan zhongbao coins for circulation throughout Eastern Central Asia.

39f Dali yuanbao coin

Stein.AK.IV.a.7

766-79
Stein, 1st expedition: Chalma-kazan, near Khotan
Bronze
Diameter: 2.4 cm Weight: 3.05 g
The British Museum,

Stein, Ancient Khotan, 577; Wang, Money

The inscription refers to the Chinese 'Dali' reign period (766–79). At this time, the Tibetans had severed communications between central China and Eastern Central Asia, and the mint in Anxi remained loyal to China by issuing coins with the new reign period.

HW

Dan yuangaa com

39h 'Yuan' coin 8th century

Stein, 3rd expedition: Toghrakakin, west of Kucha

Bronze

Diameter: 2.0 cm Weight: 1.94 g

The British Museum, Stein.IA.XVI.c.26

Stein, Innermost Asia, 994; Wang, Money.

These coins were a local creation in Eastern Central Asia. Clearly modelled on Chinese coins, their single character inscription is copied from the simplest character 'yuan' found on the Kaiyuan tongbao (cat. 39b) and Dali yuanbao coins (cat. 39f).

HW

39g Jianzhong tongbao coin

780-83
Stein, 3rd expedition: Toghrakakin, west of Kucha
Bronze
Diameter: 2.3 cm Weight: 3.17 g
The British Museum,
Stein.1A.XVI.c.10
Stein.Incremost Asia, 994: Wang, Moncy.

Like the Dali yuanbao coins, these coins were made during the Chinese 'Jianzhong' reign period (780-3). It is interesting that Dali yuanbao and Jianzhong tongbao coins were a local coinage in Eastern Central Asia, and were not issued in central China.

39i 'Zhong' coin

8th century
Stein, 3rd expedition: Toghrakakin, west of Kucha
Bronze
Diameter: 2.05 cm Weight: 1.65 g
The British Museum,
Stein.IA.XVI.c.17
Stein. Innermost Asia, 994; Wang, Money.

These coins were produced locally in Eastern Central Asia. Like the 'yuan' coins (cat. 39h), the single character inscription was copied from the simplest character 'zhong' found on the Jianzhong tongbao coins (cat. 39g).

нw

HW



40 Kharosthî document concerning slave ownership

3rd to 4th century Stein, 1st expedition: Niya Ink on wood н: 8.8 ст w: 19.6 ст The British Library Or.8211/1609 (N. XV.158) Burrow, Translation, no. 324

This document records the fate of a slave stolen by raiders from one owner and sent as a gift to a Chinese man, who repaid the original owner in cash (measured in Greek denominations of two gold staters and two drachms) and then traded him on for a bow and other goods.1 This fungible value of human life was widespread in the economy of Kroraina (Niya), where the price of a slave was often no more than that of a horse or camel.

Other Silk Road Currencies and Forms of Wealth (cats. 41-46)



41 Bolt of silk

3rd to 4th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Loulan Silk L: 33 cm and 16 cm The British Museum, MAS 677 a & b (L.A.I.002) Stein, Serindia, 373-4, 432, 701, pl. 37.



42 Contract exchanging a slave girl for a debt of silk

Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 30 cm W: 42.5 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.1946 Giles, "Dated VI", 1172-3; Giles, Catalogue, no. 7521; TTD 3A: 89–90, B: 115; Tang and Lu, Shehui 2, 49; Yingzang 3: 189; Sha, Qiyue, 79-81.

43 Fragment of a Khotanese rug

3rd to 4th century Stein, 1st Expedition: Niya Wool н: 34.50 cm w: 48 cm The British Museum, 1907,1111.105 (N.vii.3) Stein, Ancient Khotan, 334, 397, pl. 75.



44 Kharosthi document concerning tax payment and hire of camels

3rd to 4th century Stein, 1st expedition: Niya Ink on wood H: 3.5 cm W: 17.3 cm The British Library, Or.8211/1663 (N.xv.342) Stein, Ancient Khotan, 409; Boyer et. al, Inscriptions, no. 382; Burrow, Translation, no. 382;



45 Kharosthi document concerning a delayed payment

3rd to 4th century Stein, 1st expedition: Niya Ink on wood H: 4.7 cm W: 17.1 cm The British Library, Or.8211/1412(A) and (B) (N.xxiv.viii.19 & 16) Stein, Serindia, 258; Boyer et. al, Inscriptions, no. 510: Burrow. Translation. no. 510.



The majority of the Kharoṣṭhī documents from Eastern Central Asia were found at sites south of the Tarim Basin, such as Niya, Endere and Loulan. The documents were written in the third to fourth century, and throw light on everyday affairs. Many are official and financial records, in the form of legal or administrative documents, such as court rulings on disputes, contracts of sale, and records of loan, tax collection, hire and rent. Although the documents mention coins, it is clear that other forms of money were also used, and that barter played an important role.

Many of the documents mention textiles used in payment or part-payment, notably silk, tavastaga-carpets, kojava-rugs and felt garments. Silk was a common currency used in China from the Warring States period (475-221 BC) and by the mid-third century BC there was a standard unit of textile-money unit which had an equivalent value in coin. The bu, measuring 8 chi by 2 chi 5 cun (188 cm x 58.5 cm) was equivalent to eleven banliang coins. Silk continued to be used in payments, although the standard measurements changed over time. Cat. 41 is a rare example of a bolt of silk that survived in Kroraina in the Lop Desert, once an independent kingdom and neighbour of Khotan. Stein suggests that it was Chinese silk in the standard size of the Eastern Han period (although with frayed edges which reduced its width by about 2 cm). Cat. 19 shows a bolt of silk on the back of a

Silk continued in use as textile-money at many sites along the Eastern Silk Road. Cat. 42 is a later document in Chinese from Dunhuang dated to 20 December 991. It is a contract between the Zhu family and the local official Han Yuanding and his wife, Septima. The official agrees to hand over a slave girl, Xiansheng, to the Zhu family in lieu of a debt of three pieces of raw silk and two pieces of spun silk. As with all contracts, the parties involved – including the slave girl – and witnesses made their marks at the end of the contract after their names. The witnesses were both Buddhist monks. By this period Khotan had its own thriving silk industry, noted by Xuanzang and other travellers. The legendary story of how Khotan acquired silk worms and the knowledge of silk is depicted in a wooden votive plaque (Whitfield, Art, 3:70).

Khotan had a carpet and rug-making industry from even earlier and there are a few examples of this among Stein's finds, including a tufted fragment of a carpet (cat. 52) and a fragment of a Khotanese woven rug found in front of the fireplace in an ancient house at Niya, likened by Stein to an Indian Darrie (cat. 43). Several of the third- to fourth-century documents in Kharoṣṭhī from Niya, east of Khotan, mention carpets and rugs given in payment or part-payment for goods as diverse as a woman, a vineyard, and camels. Cat. 44 also concerns payment for the hire of a camel and reveals something of the complexity of the barter system in place.

The document records that Yapgu's tax has been paid using three felt garments (one was in place of the expected ghee) but that he has still not paid for the hire and keep [of the camel?]. It further records that Pleya has given one kojava-rug instead of his consignment. He has also failed to pay for the hire and keep [of the camel?]. A third person, Rutraya, has paid

1 muli for the hire of the camel; 2 muli are left over. Kamcaka has paid 1 posara for the hire of the camel; 2 muli are left over. Muli is the most frequent unit of account in these documents, developing out of the Sanskrit term múlya, meaning price, worth, value or a sum of money given in payment.

Grain was used as payment for goods and taxes. Cat. 45 records that previously three milima of corn had been received in the capital (of Kroraina), and that the price was fixed at one camel. Many years had passed, but the camel was not handed over. The case would be investigated, with the result that either one camel should be paid (after making allowance for the time that had passed), or the corn should be repaid with interest.

Camels are ubiquitous in the Kharoṣṭhī documents, being used as payments for slaves, land and taxes. The usual price of a camel was 30–42 muli (Wang, Money, 135–36) and camels were an important form of wealth. Travellers from the early merchants all the way to Stein needed to hire camels en route. If a camel died it was practice for the last keeper to pay recompense to the owner (Burrow, Translation, nos. 40, 570, 578). Recompense was in the form of another camel or carpet (Burrow, Translation, nos. 570 and 578).

Cat.46 is a letter asking for a camel to be sent: 'Let it be such a camel as will cause the Khotanese to admire us. If you do not send a camel as a result of this letter, then I will be annoyed.' Many Kharoṣṭhī letters indicate that it was quite common to send a present attached to the letter. In this case, the present was an arrow.

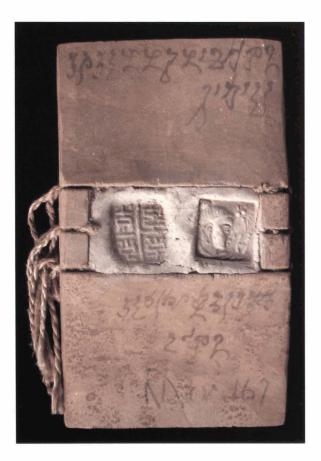
HW



46 Kharoṣṭhī document concerning camel and arrow

3rd to 4th century Stein, 1st expedition: Niya Ink on wood H: 5.9 cm w: 43.7 cm The British Library, Or.82.11/1355 (N.xvi.2) Stein, Ancient Khotan, 41, pl. 101: Boyer et. al, Inscriptions, no. 399; Burrow, Translation, no. 399.

Seals (cats. 47 and 48)



47 Kharoṣṭhī double-wedge tablet with seal

3rd to 4th century Stein, 1st expedition: Niya Ink on wood with clay and string H: 7.7 cm w: 13.2 cm The British Library, Or.8211/1617 (N.xv.167) Stein, Ancient Khotan, 406, pl. 72; Boyer et al., Inscriptions, no. 332; Burrow, Translation, no. 332;



48a-d Intaglio seals from Khotan

2nd to 6th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Yotkan and Khotan carnelian; a & b; lapis lazuli; garnet a) w: 1.3 cm b) w: 1.1 cm c) w: 1.1 cm d) w: 0.9 cm The British Museum, a: MAS 167 (Yo.0012a); b: MAS 169 (Yo.0093); c: MAS 170 (Khot.04.k); d: MAS 207 (Yo.0099). Stein, Serindia, 100-1, pl. 5.

Officials, military officers and merchants all needed to ensure the transport of messages safely and securely along the Silk Road. Along the Southern Silk Road wood was commonly used as a writing material for temporary administrative and military documents. The wooden documents were so fashioned as to allow the message to be kept hidden until a seal was broken. Cats. 46 and 47 are typical Kharosthī wooden documents, consisting of two pieces of wood. The message is written on the flattened inner sides of the pieces which are then placed text-side together and secured with string. In cat. 46 the string was passed through a hole at the pointed end and then wrapped around the other end, being secured in specially cut grooves. It was fastened in a seal socket on the top (see fig. 11). The socket was then filled with clay which was impressed with one or more seals. The seals were protected to some extent from the ravages of time by the seal socket. The name and title of the person to whom the letter was addressed was written on the outside surface.

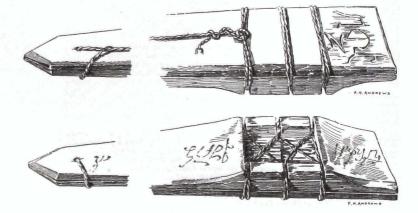
A similar system was used on Tibetan wood slips (see Takeuchi's essay here, p. 51 fig. 1), whereas paper and leather documents were folded, as shown in cat. 200 and stitched inside small bags or silk envelopes or tied with string (Stein, Serindia, pl. 153).

The seals on cat. 47 show a Greek-style female head and Chinese characters: a juxtaposition from both ends of the Silk Road. Others discovered by Stein (Ancient Khotan, 354ff) show similar subjects, from the Greek subjects Pallas Athene carrying aegis and thunderbolt, Heracles and Eros, to the Śākya king Maues and Chinese characters. As Stein remarks: 'The juxtaposition of classical seals with a Chinese one on records of the same office seems the best illustration of that strange mixture of influences from the Far West and the Far East which the culture of ancient Khotan witnessed.' (Ancient Khotan, 357).

The seals and intaglios in stone and metal found at Khotan show a similar diversity both of style and origin. Stein hypothesized that most of the seals were locally produced, but that many of the intaglios were produced further west and brought into Khotan by merchants and others. This is reinforced by the

presence of similar seals at sites further west. The four examples shown here are all judged by Stein to be poor work, the designs crude and mainly drilled. He points out that the stone used for cats. 48a and b, namely carnelian, could be obtained in the Kunlun Mountains east of Khotan.1 The boar depicted on cat. 48a, an elliptical carnelian intaglio, is similar to the terracotta boar shown in cat. 33a. Cat. 48b is almost the same size and shape. It shows a peacock, its body represented by a circular drill hole. Stein remarks 'not subtle, but effective.' Facing peacocks are a common Sasanian theme but the peacock is also one of the sacred birds of Buddhism and is shown in many of the paradise paintings found at Dunhuang. It is also the subject of Yotkan terracottas. Cat. 48c is carved from lapis lazuli, not obtainable from Khotan but from across the Pamirs in Badakhshan (present-day north-east Afghanistan) and a valuable stone used for jewellery, ornament and as a pigment in paintings along the central Silk

Fig. 11 Drawing by Fred Andrews showing how the Kharosthī double wedge tablets were secured by string. From Stein, Ancient Khotan, 349.



Road (see cats. 5–8, 249). Again the carving is unsophisticated but the design of a scorpion is clear. The final intaglio is also elliptical but plano-convex unlike the others (which are all flat) and carved from garnet. It is also very rough work and shows a male figure, possibly draped, which Stein describes as a barbarous reflection of a classical original.

1 As noted by Marco Polo: 'Peyn is a province of five days' journey in extent, in the direction of east-northeast [from the city of Khotan]....Through this flows a river, and in its bed are found many of the stones called chalcedony and jasper.' (Polo, Travels, 70).

Trade and Products of Khotan (cats. 49-53)

49 Jade pebble from Khotan

Date unknown Acquired by Macartney while in Kashgar (1890-1918) Nephrite L: 9 cm The British Museum, 1975,0522.20







50 Memo on Khotanese carpets

9th to 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang Ink on paper H: 30 cm W: 42.1 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.4525 Giles, Catalogue, no. 7662

51 Fragment of a coarse woollen pile carpet

c. late 3rd to early 4th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Loulan Dyed wool H: 22.5 cm W: 21.5 cm The British Museum, MAS 693 (L.A.vi.ii.0046) Stein, Serindia, 384, 438, 445, pl. 78; Whitfield, Art, 3: 50; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, no. 95

52 Ball of blue wool

8th to 9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Miran Fort Dyed wool Diameter: 5.5–6 cm Victoria and Albert Museum, Loan: Stein.252 (M.I.xxiv.001) Stein. Serindia. 483



Jade, as Michaelson discusses in her essay (see pp. 43–49), was the defining product of Khotan traded and supplied to China from the first millennium BC. The pebble shown here (cat. 49) was one of several collected by George Macartney when he was British Consul in Kashgar, west of Khotan. Ranging from pure white to almost black in hue, Khotan jade – nephrite – was highly prized in China and tributes from Khotan bearing jade are listed throughout the Chinese histories of the first millennium. Local documents also refer to the trade in jade.

However, Khotan was known for products other than jade: notably textiles. There was a thriving rug making industry, as shown by the frequent mention of Khotanese rugs and carpets in contemporary documents. Stein argues that the Khotan carpet industry held a practical monopoly (Serindia, 373). Cats. 44 & 76 above discuss the use of carpets and rugs in the local currency system, while cat. 50 is a Chinese memo from Dunhuang concerning Khotanese carpets. Like many of the memos from Dunhuang, it mentions several monasteries and probably concerns goods donated to them. Carpets and rugs were used by the Turkic steppe peoples; contemporary reports describe the wealth of textiles on the floors and walls of their tents. The fragment of

the woven rug shown in cat. 43 was found by Stein in front of a fireplace in a ruined house at Niya showing that by this time they were also in use by the more sedentary populations of the Eastern Silk Road. Cat. 51 is a small fragment of a woollen pile carpet of about eight knots to the inch retaining its vivid colours. It was found by Stein in a rubbish heap at Loulan, the site of the ancient kingdom of Kroraina which was Khotan's eastern neighbour in the early centuries of our era. Written documents among the rubbish were dated between 264 and 312. Stein describes its construction in some detail (Serindia, 438). He found a similar piece in Niya (N.xiv.iii.oo6.d, Serindia, 250). As well as pile carpets and woven rugs, Khotan also produced another Silk Road staple: felt. All of these could be made from camel, yak, sheep or goat hair, as Ryder has shown.1 The small ball of 2-ply blue wool shown here, cat. 52, was found at the Tibetan fort at Miran (see below), perhaps to be used by the soldiers and their wives for darning their clothes.

Many implements concerned with weaving were also found at Niya and Mazartoghrak in Khotan and in neighbouring Loulan, such as the three wooden weaving combs or beaters shown here (cats. 53a–c), all in relatively good condition.

1 See Ryder, "Fibres".

53a-c Wooden combs for beating and weaving

c.3rd century
Stein, 1st and 2nd expedition: Niya
and Mazar-toghrak
Wood
L: a) 23 cm b) 18.5 cm c) 18 cm
The British Museum,
a: MAS 554 (N.XXII.i.001);
b: 1907,1111.97 (N.XX.05);
c: MAS 472 (M.T.i.002)
Stein, Ancient Khotan, pl. 73; Serindia, 224,
249-33-448; Whitfield, Art. 3: fig. 34



54 Order to a village headman

Late 8th century Acquired by George Macartney in 1898: originally from Dandan-Uiliq Ink on paper H: 16 cm w: 28 cm British Library, Or.6394/2 (Hoernle collection M9) Skiarvo, Khotanese, 5-6



Cat. 54 is an order from General (spāta) Şşanīraka to the village headman (auva hamdasta) Sīdaka in Gaysāta, one of the Six Villages (area of modern Dandan-Uiliq), regarding the payment of 1370 mūrās owed 'per head as well as those for cloth for winter clothes' (line 2). This money had already been borrowed from the Sūlī (= Sogdian merchant?): 'Now, the Sūlī has come here. When you hear the order bring here those 1370 mūrās with the interest. The Sūlī is not going to you. If you do not bring those mūrās here within five days you will have to eat (= suffer) strong penalties' (lines 4-6).

Sīdaka appears in a number of related documents in the British Library collection (cat. 84) and also in the Petrovsky collection at St. Petersburg. He is mentioned in two Chinese documents from Dandan-Uiliq (D v.6 and Or.6407 = M 9.c) as Jiexie Sabo Silue; these two documents are dated to the sixteenth year of the Dali reign period (781) and the seventh year of the Jianzhong reign period (786) respectively. A similar document

in the St. Petersburg collection (SI P 103.40) is dated in the year of ssau Sacū (probably = 783?). Finally, Sīḍaka is mentioned in a colophon in a manuscript of the Sutra of the Lord of Healing (Or.6402B1/3): 'The Lady Dűlakā ordered it written together with her son, the Tripitaka-knower, Reverend Jīyabhadra, the spāta Sīdaka and (her) other brothers and sisters.'

This document from the Hoernle Collection was purchased in 1898 with seven other sheets of manuscripts in Brāhmī characters, and three sheets of Chinese manuscripts (Or.6405-7) by George Macartney, based in Kashgar on behalf of the Government of India from 1890 to 1918, who purchased it from the trader Badruddin. Though they were described only as coming from Khotan, they almost certainly represented some of the finds 'which Turdi well remembered to have made on a visit to the site some years previously, and which with other "old things" he had sold to Badruddin Khan, his usual employer at Khotan' (Stein, Ancient Khotan, 267).

USW

55 Clerical shopping trip to Dunhuang

10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper н: 63.5 cm w: 33.5 cm British Library, IOL Khot 140 (Ch.cvi.oo1) Skiærvø, Khotanese, 321-22

Cat. 55 lists the various commodities which were purchased on a special buying trip to Sacū (Shazhou or Dunhuang) by the Reverend Ratnavṛkṣa and Praketu. Their purchases included:

> coats of silk and wool trousers of thick and wide blanket cloth undergarments shoes of leather with laces a leather belt various kinds and colours of blankets, including one of silver-gilt [Tib. phra-men] silk cloths for washing, also cloths of goldcoloured silk, wool, felt wolf hide and sheep-skin for blankets covers 'for a dharmarājika (stupa) of red earth', and of dark earth book leather one silver cup one goblet made of vasaka wood perfume purse of camel-skin a spoon

The document was signed by Ratnavrksa and Praketu in the presence of witnesses Kvam Sīthau and Būyunā Śauśū Śvaunaka. It includes Tibetan glosses for some of the Khotanese terms1 and is followed at the end by twenty-four lines of a Tibetan Buddhist poem.

USW

1 Tibetan linguistic influence continued on the Eastern Silk Road even after the disintegration of the first empire in the mid-ninth century and the withdrawal from Khotan, Miran and Dunhuang. Professor Takeuchi argues that Tibetan was the lingua franca among Chinese, Khotanese, Uighurs and other Silk Road administrations through the ninth and possibly even into the tenth century in Dunhuang.

" na John a co co see of a colo 0 37 13 2 - 1 ma 1592900574 ० ति कि के वित अलह र हि है कि कि वित के するとのうないまっとのはりまないでう 200 8 3:18 40 18 3 30 0 18 18 3 30 mg さからないかいしてきまるからのまりのでいた うののもるなられたられれればかりき ひらるたるとろれるありとうきのへ からろうちのうのいのうちからから กพรุนชื่อองโรดเอื้องวิวุ からかきいっとううのうとかいう

Iranian Glass (cats. 56-58)

56 Sasanian glass facet-cut bowl

6th–7th century Iraq or northern Syria (acquired from the Imperial Ottoman Bank in Aleppo, Syria) Glass H: 6 cm Diameter: 8.5 cm The British Museum, 1911,0404.13

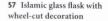
This light green bowl has a round profile and a hollow conical foot. The surface is covered with a pale brown coating, the result of heavy weathering. The bowl is decorated with six rows of round facets, and was probably first blown and then cut with the wheel. Faceting was a popular decorative feature of glasses manufactured in Persia and Mesopotamia under the Sasanian empire (224-651); the technique was inherited from the Roman glass industry established in the Eastern Mediterranean (present-day Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and northern Egypt), from the first century BC to the fourth century AD.1 Cut transparent glasses were made to imitate carved rock crystal, a rare and much sought after hardstone. The facets were intended to produce the effect of a honeycomb pattern, creating contrasts of light and shadow.

This glass bowl is clearly of Sasanian origin, and was among the precious goods that were exported from Persia to China along the Silk Route in exchange for tea and ceramic. Glass facet-cut vessels must have been rarities which could only be afforded by the social élite, and must have been treasured as exotic luxuries. A few Sasanian glass vessels have been found in China from richly furnished burials of the Northern and

Southern Dynasties period (386–589), occasionally together with Sasanian coins or gold jewellery.²

Stein was among the first scholars to collect glass finds from the Silk Route at the beginning of the twentieth century and to study them. He recovered fragments of transparent glass vessels with cut facets from a military fort at Endere and from a stupa at Loulan, and suggested they were imported from Western Asia.³ During the last twenty years, excavations run by Chinese archaeologists in present-day Xinjiang Province have uncovered a number of facet-cut glasses of Persian or Eastern Mediterranean origin, providing further evidence that these precious goods were transported through this route.⁴

- 1 Whitehouse, "La Verrerie".
- 2 An Jiayao, "Glass Vessels", 53-56.
- 3 Stein, Serindia, 282–83, 291–92 (E.Fort.0011) and 441 (L.B.0015).
- 4 Xinjiang Institute, Xinjiang Weiwuer, 310–11, fig. 124 and Xinjiang Institute, "Xinjiang Yuli xian": 36, fig. 59.



9th to 10th century Probably Iran Glass H: 24.8 cm The British Museum 1968.0722.1 (Brooke Sewell Bequest)



This blue flask has a splayed foot, a globular body, and a long straight neck. The neck is decorated with vertical cut facets and horizontal grooves, while the body has linear patterns carried out on the wheel. The shape is clearly Islamic, and represents a hallmark of Iranian glass production from the eighth to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, while the decoration is based on Sasanian models.1 Vessels such as this were made in large quantities both for the domestic and the export market and were traded as far east as China and Japan.

During the Chinese Tang and Northern Song periods (618-907 and 960-1127 respectively), glass was still little known in China, and used almost exclusively by Buddhist communities. Glass was cherished because of its origin in the west, like Buddhism, and for its transparency, which was associated with purity. Glass was also regarded as one of the Seven Treasures of the Buddhist Paradise, hence an appropriate material for offerings and religious accessories. Glass vessels in Buddhist stupas served two different purposes: they were used as reliquaries, to hold the precious remains of the historical buddha Śākyamuni and important monks; or they were given as offerings by devotees. While reliquaries were often simple small bottles fashioned in China, offerings consisted of highly decorated vessels imported from the Islamic lands; their provenance increased their value.

Flasks such as this would have been traded along the Silk Route from Persia, where glass production continued without interruption from the Sasanian into the Islamic period after the seventh century AD. Glass vessels were certainly associated with Buddhist practices, as indicated by their representation in several paintings from the cave temple complex at Dunhuang. This piece, for example, closely resembles flasks containing the drink of immortality held by Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (cat. 239) while cat. 58 shows a bodhisattva holding a faceted glass bowl similar to cat. 56.







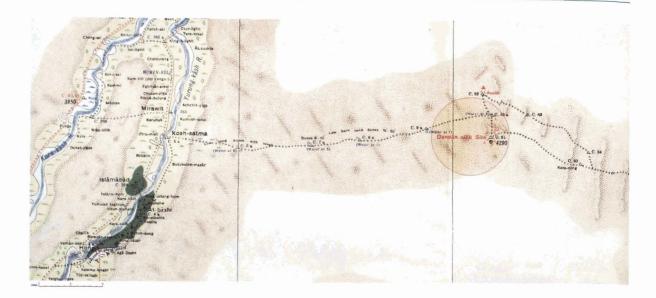
58 Bodhisattva with glass bowl

Late 9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, H: 172.5 cm W: 18 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.120 (Ch.0025) Stein, Serindia, 864, 944, pl. 77; Waley, Catalogue, no. 120; Whitfield, Art, 1: 28, 55; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, no. 23

¹ Carboni, Glass, 35.

² Shen, "Luxury or Necessity".

Dandan-Uiliq: A Temple in the Desert



Dandan-Uiliq lies 130 km north-east of Khotan as the crow flies. The town was not located on the main Southern Silk Road but on a cross-link connecting the north-south routes along the Khotan and the Keriya rivers. The majority of its ruins are Buddhist shrines or monasteries. The oasis extends over 22 sq. km but the limits of the occurrence of potsherds define the extent of the city proper: about 4.5 sq. km. Water was supplied by irrigation channels connected to one of the rivers which today percolate into the sands some 60 km south of the ruins

Dandan-Uiliq (the name is Uighur for 'Ivory Towers') was 'discovered' by Sven Hedin in 1896 and excavated by Sir Aurel Stein on his first expedition in the winter of 1900–1 (fig. 12). In 1998, the author discovered unknown murals as well as three additional ruins which brings the total of known ruins to twenty-one. In 2002, the Institute of Archaeology, Xinjiang took these and other newly excavated murals to Urumqi for conservation and detailed study.

While the date of Dandan-Uiliq's foundation is unknown, the earliest artefacts such as small stucco figures and wooden votive tablets (cats. 26, 59, 60 & 63) date from the sixth century AD, a date confirmed in 1999 by the carbon 14 dating of a wooden pillar. Documents excavated at Dandan-Uiliq written on paper and wood in Khotanese and mainly dealing with administrative matters date from the eighth century (cats. 54, 82–4 & 90). The prosperity of the town declined as a consequence of the second Tibetan invasion from 756. A letter addressed to the ruler of Khotan from the Chinese commander in 768 complains about pillaging gangs of robbers and asks for the suspension of enforced labour. The wealthy inhabitants had already left the city, with only some monks and the army remaining behind. The latest dated document is from 790; one year later, the Tibetans also captured Kucha, the head-quarters of the only remaining Chinese military administration on the

Eastern Silk Road and on the route north from Dandan-Uiliq. The last inhabitants left the oasis which disappeared back into the sands. Other documents found there were in Sanskrit, written in Southern Brāhmī script. A unique find is a Persian text written in Hebrew script (cat. 147).

Murals newly discovered in 1998 reveal strong Sogdian influence. Two triads are seen next to a symbolic representation of the 1001 Buddhas, worshippers holding lotus stems (a well-known theme in Dunhuang silk paintings), a rider on a red camel and a row of white-clothed riders on spotted horses (see cats. 59 & 60). Both feature a central female deity with one or two small children flanked by seated male gods who hold the sun and moon discs in their raised upper hands. While the deities might appear Indian at first, they might instead represent Sogdian deities inspired from the Indian and Iranian pantheons.

Who could have imagined that in the interior of the dread Desert of Gobi [the Taklamakan], actual cities slumbered under the sand, cities wind-driven for thousands of years, the ruined survivals of a once flourishing civilisation? And yet there stood I amid the wreck and devastation of an ancient people, within whose dwellings none had ever entered save the sand-storm in its days of maddest revelry; there stood I like the prince in the enchanted wood, having awakened to new life the city which had slumbered for a thousand years, or at any rate rescued the memory of its existence from oblivion.

Sven Hedin, Through Asia, 787.

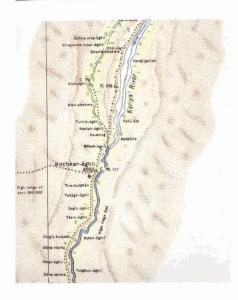


Fig. 12 Map of Dandan-Uiliq in the early twentieth century as surveyed by Stein and his surveyors, Ram Singh and Lal Singh, during the first three Silk Road expeditions between 1900 and 1915. The site of Dandan-Uiliq, the 'houses of ivory', is north-east of modern Khotan and now a twoday tramp through the desert. Chinese Turkestan and Kansu, Serial No. 32, 1:500,000, Survey of India 1918 (for key see

Figs. 13 and 14 Murals from Dandan-Uiliq each depicting a triad of deities. 8th century. Photographs courtesy of Christoph Baumer.

The first triad (fig. 13) shows, on the left, a triple-headed ithyphallic deity, at whose feet a black bull is resting. This suggests identification of it as Śīva-Maheśvara with the Nandi bull. Stein found an almost identical painting on a wooden votive plaque from Dandan-Uiliq (1907,1111.71; D.VIII.6). But scholarly discussion continues on the precise identification of the two flanking figures. The central figure cradling a tightly swathed infant in her arms is the Buddhist goddess Hariti, who protects children and fosters fecundity.

Hariti is also found as the central deity on the second triad (fig. 13) suggesting she was popular at Dandan-Uiliq, a hypothesis supported by her appearance on a votive panel found here by Stein (1907,1111.63, D.II.03 see Whitfield, Art 3: fig. 96).

The discussion among scholars as to the identification of these deities reveals both the complexity of Khotanese - and Silk Road iconography, a consequence of the rich mix of influences to which it was exposed, and to our current lack of knowledge in this area. This exemplifies the current state of scholarship on the Silk Road.





Beliefs of Khotan (cats. 59-69)

59 & 60 Votive plaques: riders with bowl and birds

c.6th century Stein, 1st expedition: Dandan-Uiliq; Skrine, acquired in Kashgar 1922-24 Ink and pigments on wood 59) н: 38.5 cm w: 18.0 cm 60) H: 20 cm W: 40 cm The British Museum, 1907,1111.70 (D.VII.5), 1925,619.25 Stein, Ancient Khotan, 298, pl. 59; Whitfield, Art, 3:69; Williams, "Khotanese painting",





Stein found several rectangular wooden plaques at the site of Dandan-Uiliq some, like cat. 63, painted on both sides. Cat. 60 is painted on one side only and the reverse shows the remains of small wooden pegs by which means it would have been fastened to the wall of a temple. Both cats. 59 and 60 contain the image of a nimbate rider on a dappled horse. As Williams points out, the armour and trappings of the rider and horse are distinct from Khotanese examples. She identifies the figure on the left of cat. 60 as Vaiśravana - holding the customary lance and stupa - and suggests that this juxtaposition provides an explanation of both plaques.

Williams points out that Tibetan writings describe an encounter between Vaiśravana and Pekar, the tutelary hero of the Turkic Uighurs: 'Pekar assumed the form of a bird of prey but was shot down with an arrow by one of Vaiśravana's yakṣa attendants and was taken captive." Williams suggests that the rider represents the Turkic neighbours of Khotan in a parade of tributes, such as the tributary camels and horses seen in cat. 17. A mural at Dandan-Uiliq described and photographed by Stein also depicts this

This painting is also interesting for the dappled horse whose origins can be traced back to 400 BC to the Tianshan - the mountains on the north of the Taklamakan.2 There are many depictions of such horses among the Silk Road finds of the first millennium and Argent argues that they are the original 'Heavenly Horses' so revered in China rather than the horse from the Ferghanan valley east of Samarkand.

- 1. An archer shooting down a black bird is a frequent theme of early Chinese art, usually taken to depict the legend of Archer Yi who killed nine of the ten suns (which took the form of black birds) when they all came out at once instead of one by one thus causing a terrible drought.
- 2. Esin, "The Horse", Haines, Appaloosa; Thanks to Professor Gala Argent for this information. See her paper "Sacred Spotted Horses".

61 Scenes from the Life of Buddha

8th to early 9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and pigments on silk H: 37.5 cm W: 17.7 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.88 (Ch.lv.0016)

Stein, Serindia, 850n., 853, 857, 1065-66; Stein, Thousand Buddhas, pl. 102; Waley, Paintings, no. 88; Whitfield, Art, 1: 35; Farrer and Whitfield, Caves, no. 29.



62 Painted panel showing Gaņeśa

7th to 8th century Stein, 1st expedition: Endere Ink and pigments on wood н: 11.8 ст w: 13.3 ст The British Museum, 1907,1111.143 (E.ii.1)

Stein, Ancient Khotan, 442, pl.78; Whitfield, Art, 3: 57; Williams, "Khotanese Painting",



63 Painted panel showing Indra, Māyā-Śrī and Brahmā

c.6th century Stein, 1st expedition: Dandan-Uiliq Ink and pigments on wood н: 10.6 cm w: 125.8 cm The British Museum, 1907,1111.72 (D.X.3)

Stein, Ancient Khotan, 299–300, pl. 64; Whitfield, Art, 3: 67; Williams, "Khotanese Painting", 140–42



64 The Book of Zambasta

7th to 8th century Acquired 1925 from Clarmont Skrine; collected in Khotan* Ink on paper H: 12 cm W: 34 cm The British Library, Or.9614 Skjærvø, Khotanese, 78-80

* One of five folios given to the British Museum in 1925 by Clarmont Skrine, Consul-General in Kashgar 1922-24. Like the Hoernle manuscripts, Skrine was given them by Badruddin in Khotan who had acquired them from 'Taklamakanchis', who had brought them back from various unspecified desert sites.

65 Chinese Vajracchedikā in Brāhmī script

10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 235.5 cm W: 25.5 cm The British Library, IOL Khot S 7 (Ch.00120) Stein, Serindia, 1450; Emmerick and Pulleyblank, A Chinese Text

The top left hand corner (lines 1-5) is missing from this manuscript, but is preserved in the Pelliot collection Paris (P. 5597). For modern scholars, the special significance of this manuscript, written in what is basically a phonetic script, lies in the evidence it provides for the pronunciation of tenth-century Chinese and Khotanese.

66 Buddhist ritual

8th century Acquired 1898 from Stuart Godfrey Ink on paper H: 7.5 cm w: 36 cm The British Library, Or.6402B2(4) (Hoernle collection) Skjærvø, Khotanese, 25







67 Dhāranī-sutra of the 1000armed and 1000-eyed Avalokiteśvara

600-1000 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 29 cm W: 769 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.231 Giles, Catalogue, no. 3793; Kumamoto, "The Khotanese", p.80 n. 2

68a-b On different orders of being

9th to 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 32.4 cm w: 80.5 cm (reconstructed digitally) The British Library, IOL Khot 139 (Ch.lxviii.001) IOL Khot 56/3 (Ch.xviii.oo1)

Stein, Serindia, 1454, 1455, pl. 148; Skjærvø

Khotanese, 318-20





क्र कार्य है है प्रकृष के कर वृत्ते क्र निकृति के कि विकित के माने विकाह कर की पर के वार्य कर वृत्ते मां के कि वेरिक्र कार्र वें कह कार्र की कार्ड है पर के के ब कार्र में विकेश के कि के वार्ष वार है क की में कि वीरिक में का दे वें यह मुद्द की में कि में महत्त्व व व्युक्त में प्रविद्या के की में कि की महत्त्व में का में विकास का की मी की कि की का में विकास मानिक ले म व में हु है है भी के ह है भा दे हैं पहु कु क भी है है है में में में व में है निकार में भी है है है इंश्य व के श्रे वह सक्तिये कि की मार्थिक किया देवें यह मुन्द्र वीक मार्चेश पर प्राप्त भी गणिति । मा के कि के के कर देवन द का देवी के के कि वाक्षेत्र के की की के क नेवा देवें महक्र के वी के के देव के कही की दकत के के कि है के महिला देव पहुक्त में के के दरके वह के व कि वेशिक्त वा केव पह कुर की के केश कार को कि बुवा करा के कि वेशिक के विवाह कुर वीके क्षेत्रक्रम म अध्यक्षिति विक्रित क्षा क्षेत्र म क्षेत्रक क्षेत्रक मा व अध्यक्ष कर ने मि मेरित के वा के विमह काई भी के ले हैं के का अ कर कर ही से कि बे दिवस के वा दे वा ह सुर की के ले के कर के अ अ अवा व मा वा की विके इने का देवार कुर्य की दे कि कर के अने बार देवें कि की का देवार मुक्त वी के कि मार्

69 Divination by bodily tremors

7th to 8th century Stein 2nd expedition: Khadaliq Ink on paper H: 8.5 cm w: 15.5 cm The British Library, IOL Khot 37/14 (Kha.vi.4) Stein, Serindia, 1440; Skjærve, Khotanese, 260-1

Buddhism was one of the first faiths to travel the Eastern Silk Road and the most successful. Although it made converts in Sogdiana, it had to contend with other faiths from further west - Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism in particular. But east of the Pamirs it soon became the primary faith all the way into China, Korea and Japan. Many of the artefacts found by Stein and others in Eastern Central Asia therefore relate to Buddhism. The founding legends of Khotan were linked with the son of the Indian king Aśoka who, the legend tells, was exiled to Taxila and thence to Khotan. Taxila is at the heart of the region known as Gandhāra in present-day Pakistan where Buddhism flourished and where a unique artistic style and script were both developed to portray the teachings of Buddha.

According to Buddhist tradition, Buddhism was founded when the prince of the Śākya royal family left his father's palace on the slopes of the Nepalese Hills, calling himself Śākyamuni, the seer of the Śākyas. The scene on the banner fragment (cat. 61) shows the prince on his white horse encountering old age (in the form of an old man on the upper scene) and sickness (lower scene), two of the four encounters which were the catalyst for his leaving the palace for good. The banner, found at Dunhuang and dating from the eighth to ninth centuries, shows the influence of China on Silk Road Buddhist art, not only in the style but also in the architecture, clothing and faces of the figures. Early Buddhist paintings in Khotan were Indian in style; more like the banner painting (cat. 131) which Whitfield suggests may be Khotanese. Williams finds Indian, Chinese, Sasanian and Sogdian influences in the paintings, exemplifying Khotan's cultural diversity.1

Many of the Khotanese paintings also show Indian Hindu deities, now incorporated into a Buddhist context. Cat. 62 is unequivocally a representation of Ganesa, the elephantheaded son of Śiva Williams notes the use of the Indian attributes, such as the radish, but alongside the use of an attribute peculiar to Khotan: 'the small rhomboidal blade with a



short handle' held by gods associated with sericulture on other wooden panels from Khotan.

The identification of the deities on cat. 63, a wooden panel from Dandan-Uiliq, is less certain. Williams tentatively accepts the identification of the two flanking figures as Indra (on the left, with crown and vajra) and Brahmā (on the right with three of four heads, each with a third eye), although points out the discrepancies, such as the fact that the right-hand figure is carrying a bow and arrow, not the usual attributes of Brahmā. She questions that of the central figure however, suggesting either a Manichaean figure, based on the iconographical similarities with female deities from Sogdiana or various Hindu gods.

This painting exemplifies the problem of relying on a unified iconography when dealing with such a culturally and religiously diverse area, such as the Eastern Silk Road. As Gulácsi points out in her caption to cat. 244, it is necessary to define and date the artistic corpus and to consult the textual tradition as well when trying to interpret the complex iconography of these Eastern Silk Road paintings.

Our earliest record of Buddhism in Khotan is the account of the Chinese monk Faxian who passed through on his way to India and Buddha's birthplace in the fourth-century. From Chinese records we know more than fifty monks made this journey before the seventh century. Pilgrims' letters, such as those in cats. 13 and 14, show that there must have been many more who were not recorded in official accounts. The Dunhuang manuscripts also give evidence of monks travelling the

other way: from India and Kashmir to China. Textual evidence supports the existence of a substantial community of Chinese Buddhists in eighth-century Khotan. The travelling monk Huichao (c.727) mentions the existence of a Chinese temple in Khotan. Moreover, several Dunhuang Chinese manuscripts have colophons that say that they were translated into Chinese in Khotan.2 Cat. 67 is one such. It is a copy of chapters two and three of the Dhāranī-sūtra of the 1000-armed and 1000eved Avalokiteśvara (T. 1060). Three of the twenty-three known manuscripts of this popular dhāranī from Dunhuang have the colophon: 'Translated in Khotan by the Western Indian monk (Bo)quiefandamo (Bhagavaddharma).' In addition, Or.8210/S.509 contains the same sutra with a note from the same translator.

In Khotan it is probable that many monks could read and write sutras in the original Sanskrit or Prakrit. The script they wrote in was Southern Turkestani Brāhmī which was also used for writing Khotanese Buddhist texts. Further east, however, fewer monks could read the original language of the scriptures and thus had to rely on translations. It is not known whether the monk Bhagavaddharma gained his Chinese skills while resident at Khotan or whether he had travelled to China. In the tenth century there were certainly many Khotanese monks resident in Dunhuang. Cat. 65 is a Chinese version of the Vajracchedikā written in cursive Brāhmī script on the back of a Chinese Suvarnaprabhāsa. The scribe was probably a Khotanese monk who was skilled in writing

Khotanese, but needed to acquire a knowledge of Chinese. The next stage would be for him to write in Chinese characters. The Chinese prepared a printed version of the Buddhist canon by 983, but there is no evidence of a Khotanese canon.

However, most of the surviving Khotanese manuscripts were in fact Buddhist texts. Cat. 64 is a folio from the Khotanese Book of Zambasta which is the longest local Buddhist composition from Khotan. Parts of it date from the Old Khotanese period (c. fifth to sixth centuries) but to judge from references to the 'red-faced', if these are the Tibetans it was probably not completed until the seventh century. It was composed at the request of an official called Ysambasta (i.e., Zambasta) and is a metrical account, in three different metres, of various different aspects of Buddhism. It is based on Indian sources, but is not a translation. One chapter claims to contain a verse from each sutra, but very few have as yet been identified. It was a long work, of which 207 folios are extant, going as far as folio 440. Numerous fragments of different copies have been discovered from at least five different manuscripts, proving its popularity extended well beyond the date of composition into the tenth century, when passages from it were incorporated into another long compendium of doctrines, the Manjuśrinairātmyāvatāra sūtra (P.4099).

Cat. 66 is an unidentified religious work concerning the ritual involved in the recitation and writing of mantra and dhāraṇī. It would appear to have been written at the order of one Maṃdūsa who may be the same person as the Maṃdūsa who sold land to Bugura (Or. 6397/1) in year 20 of king Viša' Vāhaṃ (786). This would date both manuscripts to the end of the eighth century.

This date would fit with the content which shows the influence of tantric Buddhism in Khotan, an influence inevitably enhanced by the Tibetan rule in the eighth to ninth centuries. Tantric Buddhism was a branch of Mahāyāna that became dominant in Tibet and Mongolia, and the subject of cat. 67, the 1000-armed, 1000-eyed Avalokitesvara, is a tantric form of this popular Silk Road bodhisattva (also see cats.

123, 124). However, the distinction between the different schools was probably not as clearly defined in this early period as later. Faxian and Xuanzang both noted the presence of Hinayāna and Mahayana monasteries at Khotan and Williams calls eighth-century Khotanese Buddhism with its preponderance of dhāranī and Hindu influences proto-tantra, but where the difference is one of degree rather than kind (Williams, Khotanese Painting, 115). As she points out, 'Esoteric Buddhism is known as Vajrayāna from its abundant references to the vajra ... [which] in the sense of "adamantine", is occasionally translated in Saka as 'ira, the characteristic Khotan jade' (Williams, Khotanese Painting, 116).

Cat. 68 is another unidentified Buddhist work in Khotanese. The passage, folio 255 in an obviously substantial work, describes at length the state of being a 'knower', that is of the true nature of things. The two fragments were discovered in separate rolls by Stein, hence the different Stein numbers but clearly belong together and can be reconstructed digitally, as shown in the larger image here.

Other popular beliefs continued. Cat. 69 is a divination text explaining how to predict a person's fate by the nature of their bodily tremors: a twitch of the right eyebrow, for example, showed that the person would be successful in public assemblies. Divination was a potent belief along the length of the Silk Road, various methods being used, from these bodily twitches, to cloud formations in the sky (cat. 161) to the traditional Chinese method of hexagrams (cat. 257).

Buddhism was not the only major religion at Khotan: the presence of Sogdian merchants would have almost certainly meant that there were Zoroastrian and Manichaean temples, and both Gardizi and Marco Polo noted the continued presence of a Nestorian Christian community: 'Its inhabitants, for the most part Mahometans, with some Nestorian Christians, are subjects of the Great Khan' (Marco Polo, Chapter 35).

SW & USW

- See Williams, "Khotanese Painting" for a full discussion of this.
- 2 See Kumamoto, "The Khotanese in Dunhuang", 80.
- 3 lbid., 96.

Stein's notebooks, written after his days excavating in the desert, proved an invaluable guide for his later published expedition reports. He often used small sketches, as shown in cat. 70, to record the exact provenance of finds. The sketch shows the room N.xv. in the north-west of the ruined dwelling N.v (fig. 15) at the Niya site east of Khotan. As Stein noted: 'there was nothing in the survey of the surface remains that could lead me to anticipate how rich a deposit of ancient records I had struck in this ruin. ... As soon as systematic clearing had reached the area inside the north wall is revealed layer upon layers of wooden tablets embedded in a mass of what looked like old rubbish deposits ... Thus the truth soon dawned upon me. I had struck an ancient rubbish heap ... (Ancient Khotan, 340). As his notebook shows, 363 artefacts were uncovered from this small room, including 250 wooden and leather manuscripts (see, for example, cats. 27, 40, 44, 47, 76, 77 & 141). Stein was meticulous but not infalliable: the orientation of the sketch in the notebook is wrong. Stein corrected it for publication in Ancient Khotan (fig. 15). Since he was writing up his notebooks in the middle of the night after a long day of excavation it is not surprising that he sometimes made mistakes.

The second notebook shows a drawing of a column drawn while Stein was excavating at Miran. He suggests that the column and capital was a stand for a Buddha head: like the ones he found in the desert. He was constantly alert to new interpretations of the material he discovered and often revised material in his notebooks for publication after consulting other scholars.

[Stein visited Niya on all four of his expeditions to the Eastern Silk Road.]

70 Stein's expedition notebook recording details of his excavations at Niya

February 7-8, 1901 Ink and colour on paper H: 23 cm W: 34.5 cm (open) D: 9 cm The Bodleian Library. MSS Stein 193/55v-56R

or similar object. They weigh .. owners. The smaller piece Total number of to blets, parehments & seals found has a knot in centre & shows a circular ornament like any of dolphins. Much stays he picked up the pieces below polley on 7.11.1901: 18+28 on, Sside , 58 on N side Total : 104 The clearing of N. 20. continued to day under me supervision and was completed by 60. M. The work my carried on simultaneously on the W. and S. sister, the lind 8 of the line running part the central ports being marked from 178 [-203] and those N. 300-363. The remaining portion of the accumulations along the N wall proved as rich in interesting to ble to and parelinents as before. Subsequently Thatin searchest We ared be tween the four central ports from the W. un to the circular platform close to E wall. Throughout this ares the tabletick were found from sire. 1/2 to 3/2 feet No. 326 N. found I' for shove the floor, farehueuts were numerous here : 304 305 are both complete pieces, 9" and 10" long, ; 310 [9"] shows a new hand and different address 319 (" long is incomplete. 383 (0x3) has no date and differs in text, 386 a fig. 346 10 % 212) thour yellowish colour kory wires hand . 350 has Il hier the by we Hen . - From the Spart come 182 (89): 197 (6); 201 (4 sheet like yesterday's finds & complete, but much every lest

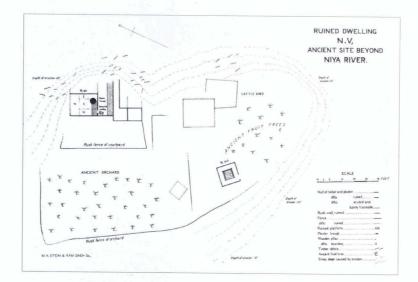


Fig. 15 Plan of ruined dwelling N.v. at Niya showing the room N.xv. to the north where Stein uncovered over 250 manuscripts. Ancient Khotan, pl. 32

ears. Welf modelled & superior " to lifesize head previously found. Colossal dimensions prove existence of large relieves probably facing the square structure on top. This house a a Steepa but status support as at is whosal head without colour owing to long exposure. Photo 804, 16F. [Returned to fort & found large no. of Til. fight of wood & paper collected from refuse heap filling rooms is & iii. Rehind the former other rooms traced tow. wall, but their excavation had to be postponed. Their roofs of rough Toghrak branches & Kumush still in situ View into interior possible through broken much brick walls . - Two jars found]. In return to camps Miran found Surv ! arrived, suffering from fever. It work till midnight torking finds & storing supplies for how lan expedition.

212" from thin to forehead, i' acres

71 Stein's notebook

December 9, 1906 Ink and colour on paper H: 23 cm W: 17.3 cm D: 9 cm The Bodleian Library, MSS Stein 198/20V-21R

KRORAINA:
SETTLEMENTS
IN THE
DESERT



Fig. 16 Stein's photograph of south rooms of ruined dwelling N.XIII, Niya, after excavation showing ancient household furniture and implements.

Stretching east from Khotan was a string of oases which formed the caravanserais of the Southern Silk Road. These pockets of settled life were developed near small rivers along the piedmont, or in the inland deltas where they ended, deep in the sand and salt-flat wastes of the Taklamakan desert. Fortified oases-states were established in these areas as early as the middle of the 1st millennium BC,1 and were already populous at the time the Chinese Han historians described them in their annals. For the next few centuries, they flourished with the booming Silk Road. But by the time of the journey of Xuanzang in the seventh century the southern route had declined and many oases had already met their demise and reverted to the desert. In the extreme aridity of the Taklamakan, whole landscapes of abandoned towns and farmsteads with their vineyards and orchards still standing, were swallowed up by drifting sand dunes and turned into virtual 'ghost-towns'. One of the best preserved of these oasis landscapes is the site of Niya, known in the ancient native language as Cadota (Ch. Jingjue 精絕).

The Niya site was first discovered and excavated by Sir Aurel Stein on his four Central Asian expeditions, and has been re-examined by a Sino-Japanese expedition over the past decade (figs. 17 and 18). Among the remains discovered by Stein were hundreds of wooden tablets and leather documents written in the Gandhārī language (a relative of Sanskrit, written in the Kharoṣṭhī script). While telling us little about the history of armies and empires, these everyday letters, administrative and legal records, and similar documents open an intimate window onto the realities of daily life along the southern Silk Road in the third to fourth century AD when Niya was part of the kingdom of Kroraina.

The use of Gāndhārī as an administrative language is undoubtedly a legacy of the Kushans, though it is unclear if their control ever extend-

ed so far to the East. A Native to what is today Pakistan and Afghanistan, Gāndhārī was used as an administrative language throughout much of the Tarim Basin, including Khotan, before the local vernaculars were written. However the spoken language of Kroraina was not related to Gāndhārī, nor was it Iranian, as in Khotan. From the evidence of names and a handful of native words it has been suggested that 'Krorainic' is a language in the Tocharian group, although the presence of loanwords and influences from numerous languages makes this uncertain.

An idea of how diverse the languages and peoples encountered in Kroraina were is given by cat. 40. This document records how the Supis, a marauding tribe of highlanders from the northern Tibetan Plateau,⁷ stole a slave who may have been a Tocharian Krorainan, or an Iranian Khotanese, and handed him over to a Chinese, while the name of the original slave-owner, Yonu, perhaps even refers here to a Greek (if from Sanskrit Yavana). "...the Supis came to Calmadana; they plundered the kingdom and carried off the inhabitants. The Supis seized a man called Samprina, a slave of the vasu Yonu and sent him as a present to Cinaṣǧaṣi (the Chinaman Ṣǧaṣi). Cinaṣǧaṣi (provided) from here, as a recompense for the man, two golden staters and two drachmas."

In another document (cat. 28), a deed for the sale of a camel found at the oasis of Endere (ancient Calmadana), one of the witnesses is a Sogdian named Nani-vadhagá, which Brough noted 'must certainly be the same name as that borne by the Sogdian Nanai-vandak who wrote a letter concerning conditions of China in the year AD 313' (see cats. 191, 192); and while 'It would be a miracle of coincidence if the same person was involved in both instances,'10 the presence of Sogdians in Kroraina, like Chinese silk merchants, provides a palpable sense of the cosmopolitanism of these settlements.



Fig. 17 Stein, Dash, his party and the diggers at the ancient remains of a water tank at Niya.

The British Library, Photo 392/27(97)

Fig. 18 (Opposite) Map of Niya in the early twentieth century as surveyed by Stein and his surveyors. Ram Singh and Lal Singh, during the first three Silk Road expeditions between 1900 and 1915.

Chinese Turkestan and Kansu, Serial No. 32, 1:500,000, Survey of India 1918 (for key see p. 134)

This same deed from Endere is also unique in being dated 'in the reign of the King of Khotan, the king of kings, Hinaza ('generalissimo') Deva Vijitasimha.' (Burrow, Translation, no. 661) indicating that the sphere of Khotanese power may also have encompassed these eastern oases at some time. At the period of the Chinese history, the Hanshu (AD 92), Niya, like its neighbours, was described as an independent oasis-state.

The seat of the king's government is at the town of Jingjue, and it is distant by 8820 li from Ch'ang-an. There are 480 households, 3350 individuals with 500 persons able to bear arms. [There are the following officials:] the commandant of Jingjue, the leaders of the left and the right and an interpreter-in-chief.

Hanshu, 92, Hulsewé, China, 93-4

By the third century, Niya was annexed by the state of Kroraina (Ch. Loulan 樓蘭, or Shanshan 鄯善), and was ruled by a larger oasis to the east,11 which was in turn the object of Chinese and other foreign intrigues (already in 77 BC Chinese envoys stabbed the king of Kroraina to death after making him drunk, in a bid to establish a client state in the Tarim). Toward the end of the fourth century, the kingdom came again under Chinese suzerainty, shortly before its collapse and the Tibetan conquest. But for the brief period in which a line of native kings ruled Kroraina, the Gandhari records of their court and their letters left a small portrait of the daily world of the Silk Road oasis at its height.

- 1 For a preliminary publication on the recently discovered protohistoric settlement of Djoumboulak Koum, the earliest of its kind in the southern Tarim, see Debaine-Francfort and Idriss, Keriya.
- 2 For the discovery and excavations of Niya, see Stein, Ancient Khotan, Serindia, and Innermost Asia and Zhong-Ri.
- 3 More imaginative aspects of daily life on the Silk Road are treated in Whitfield, Life. Găndhări administrative documents from Shanshan were also discovered at the sites of Loulan and Endere, and the bulk of the corpus was published in Boyer et al., Inscriptions and translated in Burrow, Translation. For further literature on the corpus, including some recent finds see Lin, "Kharosthi Bibliography" and Zhong-Ri.
- 4 Hitch, "Kushan".
- Lin, op. cit., adduces evidence for the early use of administrative Gandhari throughout the Tarim basin.
- 6 Burrow, "Tokharian Elements", lays out the Tocharian evidence. Recently, however, Tremblay has preferred the suggestion that the spoken language was of the Tibetan-Burmese group (Histoire de la Sérinde, 35 n.54).
- 7 Presumably the mountains the Supis were said to inhabit are the Kunlun. If not actual Tibetans, the Supi incursions would seem to presage the Tibetan armies of a few centuries later, See. Bailey, Khotanese Texts VII.
- 8 Thomas, "Drakhme and Stater". Stater and drachma, used in this document, are also Greek loan words.
- 9 Burrow, Translation, no. 324.
- 10 Brough, "Comments", 594.
- 11 The name Shanshan survived in the modern town of Cherchen, and a river which terminates in the area of Charklik, one probable location of the ancient capital (see Stein Serindia, Enoki, "Capitol of Loulan", Rhie, Early Buddhist Art).

Architecture (cats. 72 and 73)







72 Carved beam

3rd to 4th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Niya Wood L: 251.7 cm H: 36.8 cm D: 23.7 cm The National Museum, New Delhi, 2003/6/1537 (N.xxvi.iii.1) Stein, Serindia, 48 n., 234-35, 239, 264, 1248 n. fig. 63, pl. 18

Fig. 19 Stein photograph showing hall iii of ruined house N.xxvi. after excavation with decorated bracket in wood (cat. 72). Stein, Serindia, fig. 63, The British Library.

Photo 392/27(89)

When Stein arrived at the desert site of Niya all that was visible were ancient wooden poles sticking out of the sands and some ruined stupas, yet this was once one of the largest oases on the Southern Silk Road and was to prove an immensely rich archaeological resource. Stein identified over forty structures during his four visits and a Sino-Japanese team excavated another thirty in the 1990s. The searing desert wind has long destroyed most of the clay buildings but the poplar wood skeleton of the many half-timbered houses had survived in the dry desert atmosphere. Where buried by the sand the woven reed walls that filled the gaps of the wood skeleton had also been preserved. The walls were tied to the wooden posts by raffia rope (see Baumer, Southern Silk Road, 104-6 for images and a discussion of this).

Despite this, Stein was able to plan out the houses from the scanty remains and also hypothesize as to their functions, as shown by his description of the discovery of cat. 72 on his second expedition.

'owing to a covering of sand, which rose in parts to a height of eight feet, its [N.xxvi] clearing cost nearly a day's hard work, The arrangement of the rooms ... showed several interesting features. The construction of its walls in timber and plaster, with a core of horizontal reeds or else of diagonal matting, as well as that of its doors, roofing, etc., could be traced with ease ... In the set of rooms to the north, i-iv, ix, we have probably the public apartments of the house ... On the south, the family quarters may safely be recognized in rooms v-viii, communicating with each other, and approached from the rest of the house by a separate passage.

'The large room, iii, in the centre, was once, no doubt, used as the main public apartment ... and was provided with a raised sitting platform on three sides as well as an open fireplace in the centre where the roof probably showed a clerestory opening ... The only find in this room, but a very interesting one, was the massive decorated doublebracket ... Both sides ... as well as its under-surface, bear well-designed though coarsely executed motifs in bold relievo. Monsters of the composite type, such as Gandhara borrowed from Hellenistic art and Central-Asian Buddhist art also cherished, with crocodile heads, winged bodies, and the tail and feet of lions, fill the side panels on each vertical face. The central panel is occupied by a vase holding long curving stems which end alternately in broad leaves and fruits. The whole arrangement recalls that of an Indo-Corinthian capital.' (Serindia, 234-35)

Cat. 72 was found on Stein's first expedition in another ruin at the entrance to a room which he identified as an ante-chamber to the main hall. His description of this room gives some idea of the scale and importance of these houses as well as offering clues as to their furnishings.

'It measured 20 ft. square, and showed a raised platform of plaster 3 ft. 8 in. broad and 13 in. high along its north and west sides. By a door 2 ft. 9 in.





73 Table or altar frame

3rd to 4th century Stein, 1st expedition: Niya Wood H: 60 cm L: 67.8 cm D: 45 cm The British Museum, 1907,1111.85 (N.vii.4) Stein, Ancient Khotan, 334, 397, pl. 68; Whitfield, Art, 3:60, fig. 70; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, no. 124

broad and 6 ft. 4 in. high ... it communicated with the hall. Another door, slightly wider, but only 5 ft. 4 in. high, formed the entrance from the passage westwards. The single wooden leaf which once closed it was found in good preservation, and still on its hinges ... A little to the east of the centre of the room two round posts were found, 10 ft. high, which had probably supported a raised portion of the roof serving as a skylight; for just between the two posts the floor showed a small oblong area

sunk 6 in. below the general surface, which had undoubtedly been used as a fireplace. ... Within this ... lay several torn fragments of the same fine coloured rug, which I shall have to describe presently in connexion with the central hall [cat. 43] ...' (Ancient Khotan, 332)

Cat. 73 was found in pieces with their carved faces to the ground, hence their preservation. Stein photographed them separately before he realized that they fitted together: only one panel was missing. He also saw in their decorative motifs the influence of Gandhāran art:

'I may point out that the four-petalled flower of a shape closely approaching the large purple clematis, which forms its most frequent feature, is wellknown in Gandhāran sculptures ... The zigzag arrangement of these halved flowers has also its exact parallel there. The eight-petalled lotus is unmistakably Indian, while the central ornament of the front panel, with its conventionalized fruit (pomegranate?) and leaves, recalls decorative elements on certain Indo-Corinthian capitals." (Ancient Khotan, 334)

The influence of Gandhāran art on the oases of the Southern Silk Road is undeniable, but identification and interpretation of motifs and icons can be unproblematic as motifs travel across cultures and attain new iconographic significance (see cats. 244, 245, 246). In this case, while Stein suggested the central carved motif possibly represented a pomegranate, Whitfield suggests rather it is a garlanded and decorated stupa.1 On the basis of this and the eight-petalled lotuses on the front legs, Whitfield postulated that the object was certainly Buddhist and possibly an altar frame (fig. 20) rather than a carved chair, as suggested by Stein.

Fig. 20 Detail from cat. 239 showing an altar table.



Whitfield, Art, p. 312. The pomegranate was grown in Niya and even subject to a tax (see cat. 74) but it was also ubiquitous along the Silk Road taking on meanings for each culture: in China, for example, its many seeds made it a symbol of fecundity. See cat. 244 for its use in Manichaean art.

74 Farming and food in Niva

3rd to 4th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Niya Ink on wood н: 5.1 ст w: 13.8 ст The British Library, Or.8211/1414 (N.xxiv.viii.22) & 1415 (N.xxiv.viii.20)

Stein, Serindia, 248, pl. 27; Boyer et al., Inscriptions, no. 532; Burrow, Translation, no. 532



Cadota was the central town in the ancient oasis at Niya, surrounded by a landscape of farmsteads. Subsistence was centred around the production of grain and wine. Fruits such as apricots, plums, and pomegranates were grown, and several documents even mention a special pomegranate-tax. More exotic products appear in the documents as gifts: 'As a token of remembrance one (portion of) ginger has been sent."

Meat was probably a luxury. As the anonymous author of gnomic verses in one document wistfully writes, 'Thousands of jars of ghee and hundreds of jars of oil are not worth a sixteenth of one piece of meat in my opinion.'2

Farms were organized as private estates or on state-administered lands (avanas). Farmers were hereditarily bound to the collective farms of these avanas, much like serfs.

A class of free-born (aihade) landlords and officials subsisted on the production of these tenants (kilmecis), who were obliged to work the land and provide taxes. True slaves (daihas) fared much worse. One deed, for example, records a scribe buying a female slave for a price of two camels and two carpets, receiving 'ownership of that woman, to beat her, to bind her, to sell her, to give her to others as a present, to exchange her, to pledge her, to do whatever he likes with her.'3

Cat. 74 is a 'double wedge-tablet'. the stationary regularly sent by the court to governors at Niya regarding local disputes, in which the officials are instructed to investigate and judge a case (though the opinion of the court is frequently already made clear in the letter). Recording one of the common cases of kilmecis fleeing his farming obligations and the debts owed on his farm, it illustrates how binding a farmer's kinship and birthplace were:

'His majesty [the king writes, he instructs the camkura Samgtsiya and the cozbos Calmasa and Somdarasa as follows]. The vasu suvetha Bhimasena reports that a man called Vusmeka who is a member of the kilme (district) of Yave avana, has moved out to Yave avana by mother right (because his mother was native there). On his father's side (?) he is of Cadota. He fled from Cadota and they have him working there (i.e. in Yave avana). (Only) people who belong to Yave avana on their father's side are to be employed in Yave avana. Because they have been employing this man there, for that reason they pay sikhi corn as hire. When this sealed wedge-tablet reaches you, forthwith careful inquiry must be made. Wherever this man Vusmeka has been employed, he is to be handed over to Casgeya along with the hire, along with the monks. Whoever disputes this, are to be sent here.'4

- 1 Burrow, Translation, no. 354. A gift of ginger, pepper, cardamons, and sugar was sent with one letter to announce that 'Atamsiyae here has survived the pains of childbirth in safety and good health.' (Burrow, Translation, no. 702, Boyer et al., Inscriptions,
- 2 Burrow, Translation, no. 514.
- Ibid., no. 590. Cf. Atwood, Life and Agrawala, Position of Slaves on serfdom and slavery.
- 4 Ibid., no. 532.

75 Work and taxes in Niya

3rd to 4th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Niya Ink on wood H: 5.8 cm w: 25.2 cm The British Library, Or.8211/1425 (N.xxiv.viii.70) & 1426 (N.xxiv.viii.31)

Stein, Serindia, 259, 260; Burrow, Translation, no. 567; Boyer et al., Inscriptions, no. 567



While farmers were 'employed' in the counties of their birth or marriage as serfs, others such as soldiers, frontier-guards, and military camel overseers were also bound to mandatory state service. Official employment as a letter-carrier, transportation officer, escort, scribe, interpreter, or even secret agent allowed more freedom, including the opportunity to enter the hierarchy of titled positions in the state bureaucracy.1 This bureaucracy was elaborate, with official titles for different tax collection duties, officials responsible for particular products (grain officers, animal officers), border magistrates, and the higher positions of county administrators, judges, and so on. Titles of the landowning aristocracy, such as ogus and vasus, were probably more honorific (as counts, barons, etc.). Monks too stood apart from the system of social obligations, but monasticism entailed its own duties. A document recording monastery regulations reads: 'Whichever monk does not partake in the activities of the community of monks shall pay a fine of one bolt of silk.'2

It is uncertain how much different positions paid, but holding several may have been lucrative. In one document, a man is caught holding too many jobs, and the court writes: 'This is not lawful that one man should hold five or six offices ... The king's cows are to be handed over to a man who has not held (any other) offices.'3 In another case a man named Sugiya complained to the court of being assigned too many duties, being a taxcollector, a scribe, and a frontier-guard. In the wedge-tablet here, the governor is instructed to fire Suğiya in his capacity as a tax-collector, after his deliveries of wine are found to be short to the amount of 150 milima. Although the exact value of a milima is unknown, the measure is derived from the Greek medimnos, a unit equivalent to about 25 kilos. This would make the total amount Suğiya was accused of embezzling over his four-year tenure close to 4,000 litres of wine.4 Such exorbitant and seemingly arbitrary demands for taxes were common.

- 1 Atwood, Life, 175 ff.
- 2 Burrow, Translation, no. 489.
- 3 Ibid., no. 439.
- 4 The figure is in fact probably higher, since the medimnos was a dry measure, equal to 192 kotyle (a unit used for both dry and wet measures) which according to the Oxford Classical Dictionary 'ranges from 210 ml to more than 330 ml. ... the most usual being 240 and 270 ml'. This would make 1 liquid milima equal to about 50 litres. Whatever such calculations are worth, the amount owed was in any event very large. On purely internal evidence, we know that for the transportation of wine 'The load of one camel is 1 milima 1 khi' (Burrow, Translation, no. 329, versus three milima of grain per camel in no. 291), 150 milima of wine would thus amount to some 142 camel loads. For literature on the identification and value of milima, see Burrow, "Further Documents", 111. Burrow, "Iranian Words", 785, Agrawala, "Weights and Measures", 360-62; Bailey, "Gandhari", 767; and Thomas, "Drakhme and Stater".

MP



76 Land purchase in Niya

3rd to 4th century Stein, 1st expedition: Niya Ink on wood H: 9,9 cm W: 25.8 cm The British Library, Or.8211/1494 (N.xv.ii.a) Boyer et al., Inscriptions, no. 222, pl. 4; Burrow, Translation, no. 222 This Kharosthī document is a deed for the sale of a piece of land in exchange for a carpet. The turn of phrase used for this transaction, where the two parties 'gift' their property to one another, illustrates the persistence of old forms of reciprocity within the Silk Road market economy. In fact, the use of textiles as a kind of currency, even when the actual cash value of the carpet is explicitly stated as in this document, is one of the salient features of that global market economy.1 Transactions using the phrase 'buying and selling,' and naming a price, are also common, and one document even discusses the current rate of gold in the mountains (Boyer et al., Inscriptions, no. 140). The existence of such a gift-giving economy side by side with one based around markets carries many implications for how traditional

Central Asian societies were adapting to the globalizing economic transformations brought with the Silk Road.

'In the 22nd year of his majesty the great king Jitugha Mayiri, son of heaven, in the first month and the 25th day, at this date the scribe Ramşotsa, Suğuta, Sunamta, Kuñita, and Casgeya arose and gave as a present to the cozbo Somjaka akri-land of an extent capable of receiving 2 khi of seed of adini, and some more land outside-the extent of both together was (such as to receive) 5 khi of adini. The cozbo Somjaka arose and gave as a gift to the scribe Ramşotsa and Suğuta as a return for the land one rug (kojava) worth 10 muli. They agreed on equal terms. From this day forth in that land the cozbo Somjaka has full power to sow, plough, give it in exchange and do whatever he pleases with it.'



77 Death and inheritance in Niya

3rd to 4th century

Stein, 1st expedition: Niya Ink on wood H: 10.6 cm W: 22.1 cm The British Library, Or.8211/1610 (N.xv.160) Stein, Ancient Khotan, 406, pl. 96; Boyer et al., Inscriptions, no. 326, pl. 4; Burrow. Translation, no. 326

Cat. 77 provides an idea of the Krorainan view of death, couched in a kind of epistolary fiction, since the document is evidently a scribal exercise rather than a real letter:1

'I have heard the bad news that Anasena is dead. As a result of that news we have experienced the shafts of great sorrow and grief in our hearts. That is something beyond even the powers of a Buddha, or a Pratyekabuddha, or an Arhant or a Universal Monarch. All come to the same end. Care must be exercised how we go, virtuous acts performed and purity maintained.'

Although many legal documents governed everyday life, wills were not one of them. This sometimes led to disputes over inheritance. In one case, a farm and vineyard were inherited by three brothers from their father, who inherited them from his father. The brothers came to blows over their inheritance, and one broke his elder brother's bone. The court decided the case:2

'So now they have made an equal division of it all (including) the detailed items of clothing, bedding, etc. A decision has therefore been reached. Also this younger brother Cimola has beaten Kuýaya and broken a bone. Now Cimola has been punished. Seventy blows have been given him, he is much cut up. The recompense has been made a

man five distis high. So from now on the elder brother shall beat the younger brother, and the father shall beat the son - so is an end to be made to this matter.'

Cat. 77 records the settlement of a dispute over the inheritance of a house and a farm, where one party claimed these belonged to the communal property of the county (avana). Such strains between individual and communal inheritance rights may reflect the growth of personal property and a market for land and its products beside traditional forms of inheritance bound up with kinship.

'The cozbo Ṣamasena made a representation (saying): The farm and house of Kamaya is our inherited property. There many old people of Cadota came out as witnesses. Considering that the house and farm and land of Kamaya is the inherited property of the cozbo Şamaşena, we have decided that this house and farm and land, along with everything on it belongs to the cozbo Ṣamaṣena. There shall be no payments or receipts on the part of the people of Trasa Avana, the matter has been cleared, a decision has been made.

MP

¹ Burrow, Translation, no. 399.

² Ibid., no. 187

The Implements of Daily Life (cats. 78-81)

78 Broom

7th to 8th century Stein, 1st expedition: Dandan-Uiliq Grass stalks L: 38 cm The British Museum, 1907,1111.66 (D.II.011) Stein, Ancient Khotan, 251, 294, 336, pl. 73





79 Sieve for milk

3rd to 4th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Niya Withies bound with string, yellow felt, vegetable fibre Diameter: 24.5 cm The British Museum, MAS 528 (N.XII.0018) Stein, Serindia, 247, pl. 28; Whitfield, Art, 3: fig. 76

80 Mousetrap

3rd to 4th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Niya Wood L: 36.8 cm The British Museum. MAS 533 (N.XIII.iii.oo1) Stein, Serindia, 217, 249, pl. 19; Whitfield, Art, 3: fig. 67

In use, the large hole is placed over a mouse hole or run. In passing through, the mouse releases a check and causes an arrow to be discharged along the V-shaped channel at itself.





81 Animal trap

1st century BC Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang Limes Fibre and wood Diameter: 15 cm The British Museum, MAS 796 (T.XV.a.i.009) Stein, Serindia, 704, 782, pl. 54; Whitfield, Art, 3: fig. 24 Before the nineteenth-century many excavated artefacts such as those shown in cats. 78–81 would not necessarily have been recorded or kept by the archaeologists who excavated them. But Stein was inspired by a new ethos expressed by Flinders Petrie in his 1904 book, *Methods and Aims of Archaeology*, in which he argued that every item, however small or insignificant on first appearance, was important. Stein, as usual, expresses this view succinctly and elegantly:

'The dwelling places, shrines, etc., of those ancient settlements had, no doubt, before the last desert sand finally buried them, been cleared by their inhabitants and others of everything that possessed intrinsic value. But much of what they left behind, though it could never tempt the treasure-seekers of succeeding ages, has acquired for us exceptional value. The remains of ancient furniture such as the wooden chair reproduced on p.356; the shreds of silks and other woven fabrics; the tatters of antique rugs; the fragments of glass, metal and potteryware; the broken pieces of domestic and agricultural implements, and the manifold other relics, however humble, which had safely rested in the sand-buried dwellings and their deposits of rubbish - these all help to bring vividly before our eyes details of ancient civilisation that without the preserving force of the desert would have been lost for ever.' (Sand Buried Ruins, xviii)

Contracts in Eighth-century Khotan (cats. 82-84)



Legal contracts from the eighth century were drawn up on wood and paper. Cats. 82 and 83 are two examples of the earlier kind of boxshaped wooden contract written in Khotanese in the area around Dandan-Uiliq. The shape, whereby the lid/envelope slides off and reveals further texts underneath, is perhaps a development of the simpler Kharosthi wooden wedge-shaped documents used in third- century Niya (see cats. 74-77). Like the Kharosthī documents, a seal socket on the lid contained the clay seals of the officials on whose authorisation the documents were issued.1

Cat. 82 contains two versions of the same document. The second, written on the inside of the cover and the top of the undertablet, is the more extensive version. The document is dated in the reign of King Viśa' Dharma (r. c.746-56) and records a case heard at a legal assembly in the village of Birgamdara. It concerns the sale of water rights from the pool of Phema by the judge (pharsa) Bara and Bramgala to Yagura for 2500 mūrās. If the document has been correctly interpreted, it would seem that Bara, Bramgala and Yagura between them had the right to divert the water from the dammed-up river 'for one day and one night'. They undertook to work together in the same field, Bara

82 Water rights

Mid-8th century Acquired 1923, N. Fitzmaurice: originally from around Dandan-Uiliq Ink on wood H: 23.5 cm w: 14 cm D: 7 cm The British Library, Or.9268A Skjærvø, Khotanese, 66-8; Skjærvø, "Legal Documents

83 Sale of a man for 2500 mūrās

Provenance unknown: originally from Dandan-Uiliq Ink on wood H: 18 cm w: 18 cm The British Library, IOL Khot W 1 Skjærve, Khotanese, 557-59; Skjærve, "Legal Documents"

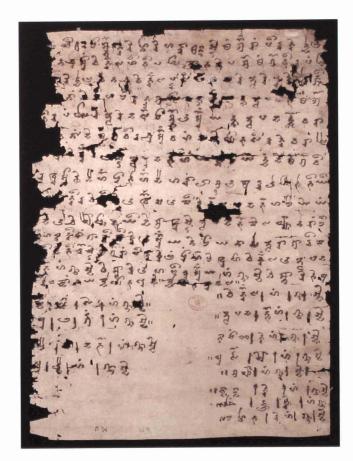


receiving two kūsas of grain and Yagura one. The case was presented before the judges (pharṣa) Chuṃgula and Vikrāntadatta with witnesses: Ṣanīra, Saṃgadatta, Sucaṃdra, Īrasaṃga, Puñaudaka, Suvidatta of Pa', Butṭaṇaka of Phema. The document was deemed effective when signed by the pharṣa Bara whose seal, presumably, was impressed in clay in the seal socket on the top.

A second wooden document, cat. 83, is dated in the first regnal year of the Great King of Kings of Khotan, Viśya Sīhya (r. c.737-46) and is signed by the General (spāta) Visala whose clay seal is still preserved. Like the previous document, this deed also concerns a hearing at a legal assembly in the village Birgamdara. The details of the case are not at all clear but involve the sale of Bradāysai's half brother Brīyaka to the judge (pharṣa) Visauna: 'Him I now sell at the price of 2500 mūrās. He is (stationed) at the Inner Fort.' The document was written by the scribe Kharadatta at the villagers' order from the dictation of Bradāysai. The scribe Kharadatta appears again as the scribe of a very similar document from the fourth year of Viśya Sīhya's reign (Urumqi 1).2 A second document is appended on the underside of the tablet. It is dated in the second regnal year of Viśa' Dharma and concerns the same brothers Bradāysai and Brīyaka with a third, Virsa, who were 'bought' for 1000 mūrās - as compared with 2500 for one brother only some ten years earlier which they had to repay with wheat.

Cat. 84 is a later paper document dating from the twenty-second year (of king Viśa' Vāham, 788), also probably from Dandan-Uiliq. It concerns the payment of Vimkausa's half brother as labour in lieu of a tax payment of 5,000 mūrās (lines 2–3). It contains provisions for sickness and loss of salary(?) 'if he becomes sick he has seven days' jurisdiction. And (if) he remains (?) ailing more (than that) then for him …' (line 8). Unfortunately because of several lacunae and unknown words the exact meaning is unclear. This document also mentions the same Sīdaka of cat. 54.

A characteristic of paper contracts of this kind³ is the use of 'finger-seals' (hangusti) which are represented by three (usually) short vertical strokes dividing the syllables of the person's name, or as here, the word hangusti itself. 'This writ concerning tax-collectors (?)



will take effect when Viṃkausa and Mūpadatta put their fingers on it and the villagers all together put their fingers on it. These were the witnesses: the spāta Sudaṃ, the spāta Budesa. Brīyāsa's finger (mark), Viṃkausa, Punargam, Mūpadatta, Maiyadatta, Japāṇaka, Arrtai, Arsāla, Śalā, Jsajsaka, Pheṃdūka, and Mahvetara's finger (marks)' (lines 12–22).

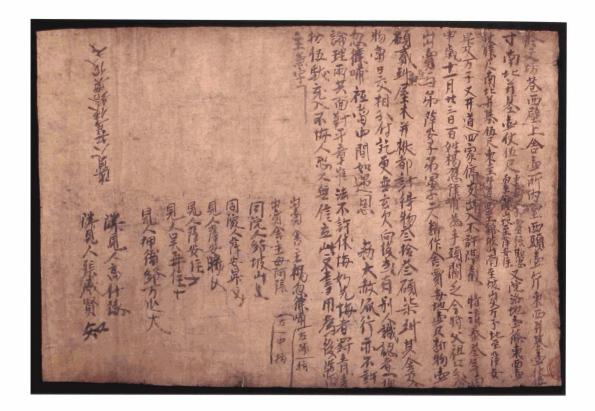
1 For detailed accounts of the kinds and uses of documents in Khotan, see Skjærvø's essay here (pp. 34–42), also his "Legal Documents" and Kumamoto's "Khotanese documents".

- 2 See Skjærvø, "Legal documents".
- 3 Kumamoto, "Khotanese documents", 35.

84 Sale of a brother for 5000 mūrās

Acquired 1899 by George
Macartney: originally from
Dandan-Uiliq
Ink on paper
H: 38 cm W: 28 cm
The British Library,
Or.6395/1 (Hoernle collection M10)
Skjæro, Khotanese, 6–7; Skjærve, "Legal
Documents"

Contracts in Ninth- and Tenth-century Dunhuang (cats. 85–87)



85 Contract for sale of house

Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 30 cm w: 42.5 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.1285 Giles, "Dated V", 334–35; Giles, Catalogue, no. 7544; DSJW2:9; TTD3: 85(136)–86(135)'; Hansen, Negotiating, 63

86 Contract for labourer

924 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 30 cm W: 42.5 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.1897 Giles, "Dated V" 333; Giles, Catalogue, 3793; DZ 333-34; DSJW2: 59; TTD3: 122(99)





87 Wine to field labourers

2068 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 29.5 cm W: 14 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.5571 Giles, Catalogue, 7432; Jiang, Tang wudai, 305; Yingzang 8: 40; Tang and Lu, Shehui 3, 625

Like the oasis towns in third- and fourthcentury Kroraina and in seventh- and eighthcentury Khotan, Dunhuang was also dependent on irrigation to support the grain fields and fruit orchards surrounding the walled town. The legal documents therefore reflect the same everyday concerns with land ownership, agricultural labour and irrigation.

Cat. 85 is a contract for the sale of a house by Yang Hulübu and his mother, dated (using the Chinese system) the twenty-third of the eleventh month of the third year of Qingtai (936). This contract documents the sale of part of the hereditary estate of Yang and his mother Azhang forced by their financial hardship. The purchasers were Xue Anzi and Xue Fuzi, younger brothers of Xue Ansheng and Xue Wanzi, whose property lay north of the parcel under sale. In addition to the vendors, the names listed at the end of the contract include two other persons sharing common boundaries with the property, Xue Ansheng and Deng Poshan, with property to the west and south respectively, and four witnesses and three 'neighbourhood' witnesses. The name of one of the latter, Zhang Weixian, also appears in Or.8210/S.1898. The document ends: 'Fearing that others might not believe this contract, we draw up the text to use as proof later.' The importance of this proof is shown by another document from Dunhuang dated to 945 which concerns a court case when a certain Widow Ah-long claimed the rights to a piece of land from her nephew.2

As in the documents from Khotan (cat. 84), it was common practice for illiterate people to 'sign' documents by means of marking their finger joints: both the seller and his mother mark the document by this means, one witness writes the character for 'understood' while the others draw more tentative marks.

Land was used primarily for growing various produce; land beyond the area fed by rivers or the network of irrigation canals was presumably worthless and therefore not subject to individual ownership. But the value of the land could only be realized if it was worked. Cat. 86 is another contract in which a Mr Zhang of Dunhuang, 'lacking able-bodied young men in his own family' hires the services of a labourer surnamed Yin, of the same district, from the second to the ninth month inclusive, and promises to give him by way of payment a suit of spring clothes with long sleeves and a pair of unlined leather shoes. It is dated the first of the second moon of 'jiashen', the fourth year of the Chinese reign period Longde [8 March 924]. At the end, space is left for the names of the hired man, a guarantor, and [the other way up] two witnesses.

It was common along the Silk Road to pay labourers in goods rather than money, including food and drink. Cat. 87 is a request for payment from a wine seller, Deng Liuding, for wine supplied to field labourers, probably dated to 968. Several other documents from Dunhuang concern the similar payment of artisans and artists. Grape wine was popular on the Silk Road (see cats. 172, 173) especially among the Romans, Arabs, Sogdians, and Uighur Turks, and the Turfan area on the northern branch of the Eastern Silk Road was (and continues to be) renowned for its grapes.3 Cat. 87 is also interesting for the 'bird signature' found on many tenth-century administrative documents from Dunhuang.4

^{1.} See Hansen, Negotiating, 63 for a discussion of this and other contracts of the period.

^{2.} Ibid., 68-74.

^{3.} However, many of the drinks translated as wine are, in fact, made from grains.

^{4.} See Eliasberg, "Les signatures".

Women on the Silk Road (cats, 88-91)

88a-c Terracotta heads of women

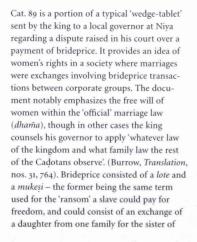
(see pp. 139-41) 3rd to 6th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Yotkan Terracotta H: 5.3-6.5 cm The British Museum, OA MAS 32 (Yo.009.h.5); MAS 33 (Yo.009.h.10); MAS 34 (Yo.009.h.13) Stein, Serindia, pl. 1



89 Dispute over brideprice

3rd to 4th century Stein, 2nd exhibition: Niya Ink on wood H: 4.9 cm W: 25.4 cm The British Library,

Or.8211/1444 (N.xxiv.viii.54) Stein, Serindia, 259, ; Boyer et. al., Inscriptions, no. 555; Burrow, Translation, no. 555.





the groom (Burrow, Translation, no. 32), or in the case of an older woman exchanged for a young one, a camel and a horse in addition. Such marriage exchanges were typical even of monks (Burrow, Translation, no. 418).

Women were nevertheless accorded many legal rights, such as property rights (in Burrow, Translation, no. 677, a deed for the exchange of land, we read: 'This land has become the property of the woman Kosenaya. She is to exercise authority over it in all matters.'). Women also had power over their inheritance (e.g. Burrow, Translation, no. 528), and because the inheritance of land in some cases passed through the female line (cf. Burrow, Translation, no. 474, where a woman's inheritance 'is to be divided in equal portions between her sons and daughters'),

women would have played powerful roles in the social fabric (Burrow, Translation, no. 555).

'[...]with Kopemna there is a woman called Koparşaniae. If the mukeşi [brideprice] of these women has not been given, if they have not agreed with these women of their own free will, in that manner a decision is to be made according to law. If, however, they have been taken in lawful wedlock, in that manner the question is to be judged according to law. If you are not clear there, at a time the road is safe they are to be sent here under escort. The sworn testimony of the witnesses is to be written in a letter and a letter of information to be sent here. There will be a decision here in our presence.'

90 Ownership of a woman and her daughter

8th century
Stein, 1st expedition:
Dandan-Uiliq
Ink on paper
H: 24.5 cm W: 28.2 cm
The British Library,
IOL Khot 3/1 (D.iii.12)
Stein, Ancient Khotan, 295, pl. 110;
Skierve, Khotanes, 167

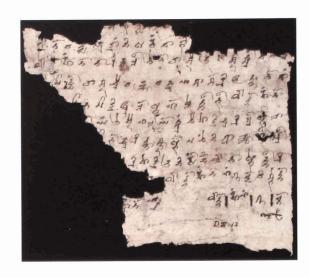
Life for the Sogdian women in fourth-century Dunhuang was far from easy. In two letters to her absent husband and mother (cats. 191, 192), the abandoned Mīwnāy and her daughter have had to become servants of the Chinese. She writes: 'I live wretchedly, without clothing, without money; I ask for a loan, but no-one consents to give me one, so I depend on charity from the priest.' She complains bitterly to her husband: 'I obeyed your command and came to Dunhuang and did not observe my mother's bidding nor that of my brothers. Surely the gods were angry with me on the day when I did your bidding! I would rather be a dog's or a pig's wife than yours!'

Royal women, in contrast, were presumably treated very much better. The daughter of Cao Yijin (r. 920–34) was married to the king of Khotan Viśa' Sambhava, and the third daughter of the latter was married to Cao Yuanzhong, one of his sons. Viśa' Sambhava is the patron (*Kuzhu*) of Cave 98 of Dunhuang, and the picture of his third daughter is depicted as Queen (*Tiangongzhu*) of Shazhou in Cave 61 (fig. 8). Nevertheless, men could easily dispense with their wives and take on new ones. The first four lines of cat. 278 relate how the envoy Panakā took a Chinese woman: '... I make (her) my wife. The wife belonging to the house I expel.'

Cat. 90 is a fragment of an undated legal document in Khotanese from Dandan-Uiliq,

91 Abduction of married women to Dunhuang

10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 48 cm w: 30 cm The British Library, IOL Khot 138 (Ch.ii.001) Stein, Serindia, 453; Skjerve, Khotanese, 337–18





found buried in the sand in what was probably the ruins of some kind of religious dwelling (Stein, Ancient Khotan, 256). Here Lattärham's wife accepts ownership of a woman, but Lattärham assumes the responsibility for finding a husband for her daughter, Yaśāśärī Khattunä, when she grows up. Note that 'Whoever may change this polished and settled case, [to] the court he will pay ... mūrās and receive 30 strokes' (lines 7-8).1

Cat. 91 is a Khotanese document from Dunhuang containing a copy of a petition to the governor concerning the practice of abducting women from lower social strata for wives. The governor apparently decides that married women could not be so abducted. The petitioner, who may have had his heart set on another of the abducted women, but a married one, then asks that he may have one of them who is not married. The governor's final decision is unfortunately not preserved.

'... that: They have abducted here the married women

And the Governor made a report to us thus [that]: At the court, is the būjsamja for (Our) consort the great queen (the) better (one?) or Our life? And They deigned ... to us that: They can not abduct the married women (and bring them?) here (?) (for wives).

Then we brought before Them a report regarding Āśi'rkā that: If those are married women and they can not be abducted (and brought?) here?, then there is a problem there.

Then order Āśi'rkā to be given to me because she is unmarried, as long as there will be no problem

USW

1 See Skjaervø, "Legal Documents" for an account of documents of this kind

92a-d Terracotta camels

(see pp.139-41) 3rd to 6th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Yotkan and Hoernle Collection: donated by the British Collection of Central Asian Antiquities: Yotkan Terracotta H: 3.3-7.6 cm The British Museum, MAS 24 (Yo.008.c); MAS 8 (Yo.011.c); 1902,1220.374; MAS 25 (Yo.008.d) Stein, Serindia, pl. 2;, Whitfield, Art. 3: 76



MIRAN: WAR AND FAITH



Fig. 21 Depiction of the Tibetan king and his retinue in the audience to the debate between Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśrī on a wall painting at Dunhuang.

Dunhuang, Cave 159. Courtesy of the Dunhuang Academy

Miran: An Outpost of the Tibetan Empire

Miran is situated where the utterly barren Lop Desert meets the forbidding Altun Shan mountains (fig. 22). Over two thousand years ago, a river flowing down from the snowy mountains irrigated the land around Miran, which supported a town, one of the smaller settlements in the country of Kroraina. When the Chinese Han dynasty (206 BC – AD 220) extended its empire into Central Asia, Kroraina was brought under Chinese control. In the second century, the Kushan empire, which ruled the region of present-day northwest India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, extended its influence over Kroraina.

While the Kroraina kingdom flourished Miran developed as an early centre of Buddhism. Many monasteries and stupas were built in the area, decorated with painted friezes and sculpture. The influences of Gandhāra and regions even further west can be seen in these artistic works. In the stable period of the Kushan empire, artists may have travelled from far away. One painting is signed by the painter, who was called Tita, a name that has been interpreted as a version of the Roman name Titus.

After the fourth century the kingdom of Kroraina declined, and the branch of the Southern Silk Road through the Lop Desert became much more difficult to travel. It was not until the conquering armies of the Tibetans arrived in Central Asia in the eighth century that Miran was occupied again.

To begin with, Tibet was composed of small clans constantly at war. Then, at the beginning of the seventh century, the kings of the Yarlung dynasty brought together these rival kingdoms. Under King Songsen Gampo, the fighting power of the clans turned outward against Tibet's neighbours in an agressive policy of expansion. This ferocious army, in allegiance with the Turks and the Arabs, toppled many of the great cities of the Silk Road and pushed into China, at one point even capturing the Chinese capital Chang-an (in 763).

Our knowledge of the early history of Tibet has increased greatly with the discovery of two important Tibetan historical documents in the Dunhuang Library Cave, known as the Old Tibetan Annals and Chronicle. The Annals (cat. 93) present a year-by-year account of the

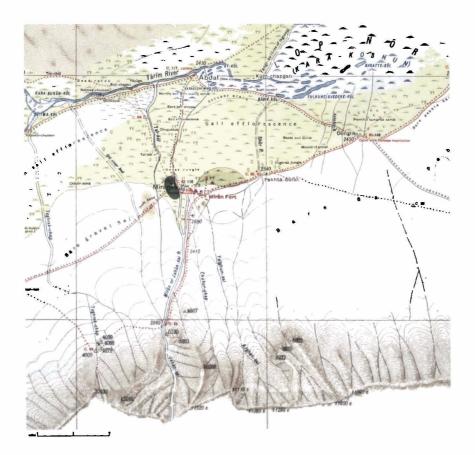


Fig. 22 Map of Miran in the early twentieth century as surveyed by Stein and his surveyors, Ram Singh and Lal Singh, during the first three Silk Road expeditions between 1900 and 1915 (for key see p. 134).

Chinese Turkestan and Kansu, Serial No. 32, 1:500,000, Survey of India 1918

activities of the Tibetan kings and their armies in the crucial years 629 to 764

The old town of Miran lay at the end of one of the mountain passes over which the Tibetan armies crossed into Central Asia. Thus it was an ideal location to establish a defensive garrison when the Chinese soldiers withdrew in the mid-eighth century to deal with rebels in central China. The Tibetans moved in, built a fort (figs. 23 and 24), and established a community using Miran's old irrigation system. They remained in Miran from the eighth century until after the Tibetan Empire crumbled in the mid-ninth century, when the last Yarlung king was assassinated with no clear successor.

The Russian explorer and archaeologist Colonel N. Prejevalsky rediscovered the Miran site in 1876. Then in 1905 the American Geologist Ellsworth Huntington paid a short visit to Miran and became the first to examine the site in any detail. Recognizing its Buddhist character, he identified the fort, a monastery, and two stupas. In 1907, Stein came to Miran and undertook the first proper archaeological survey, collecting hundreds of Tibetan documents from the fort, and removing some of the murals from the walls of one of the shrines (see frontispiece). In 1910, Tachibana Zuicho, one of the team sent by Count Ōtani to bring back Buddhist texts and paintings from Central Asia, visited Miran. When Stein returned to Miran on his third expedition in 1914 he lamented the destruction caused by the manner in which murals had been removed by the Otani mission.

Since the 1950s Chinese archaeologists have carried out several excavations at Miran. In 1957-58 Professor Huang Wenbi of the Institute of Archaeology, Academy of Social Sciences, toured Xinjiang and conducted preliminary surveys of major ruins. He spent only a few days in Miran recovering some objects from the Tibetan fort. In 1973 an archaeological team from the Xinjiang Museum, with Beijing archaeologist Chen Ge, mapped the canal system at Miran and undertook a fundamental survey of the site. In 1978-80 Huang Xiaojiang and Zhang Ping of the Xinjiang Museum visited Miran several times and conducted further work to supplement the 1973 survey.

The great majority of manuscripts found in the Miran region are Tibetan documents from the fort. These are written on paper or wood, and largely comprise official documents, contracts and military communications. These documents, from the eighth and ninth centuries, are some of the earliest examples of Tibetan writing. The Tibetan script had been invented probably only a century earlier when, according to Tibetan histories, King Songsen Gampo sent a minister to India in the seventh century to study the script of the Guptas and create a new script in Tibetan. Tibetan script does have a strong resemblance to the Gupta script, as well as to the Central Asian Brāhmī seen for example in Khotanese writing.

SvS



Fig. 23 Stein's photography of the Tibetan fort at Miran seen from the south The British Library, Photo 392/27(109)



Fig. 24 Stein's plan of Miran Fort.

93 Tibetan Annals

9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 25.8 cm w: 364 cm The British Library, IOL Tib J 750 Bacot, Documents; Uray, "The Old Tibetan



Friends and Foes (cats. 94-99)

94 Vaiśravana on his way across the waters

9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and pigments on silk H: 37.6 cm W: 26.6 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.45 (Ch.0018) Stein, Serindia, 181, 842n., 874-85, 942-43, Pl. 72; Waley,

Paintings, no. 45; Whitfield, Art, 2: Pl. 16; Whitfield and

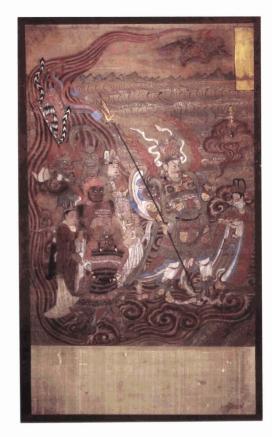
95 Virūpākṣa, Guardian of the West

Farrer, Caves, no. 9

9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and pigments on silk H: 45.5 cm W: 16 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.106 (Ch.xlix.007) Stein, Serindia, 1052; Waley, Paintings, no. 106; Whitfield, Art, 1: Pl. 61; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, no. 42

96 Dhrtarastra, Guardian of the East

9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and pigments on silk H: 40.5 cm W: 15.5 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.129 (Ch.xxvi.a.006) Stein, Serindia, 1032-33. Pl. 82; Waley, Paintings, no. 126; Whitfield, Art, 2: Pl. 62; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, no. 43







97 Avalokiteś vara-sūtra copied by Chinese soldier on duty in Tibet

May 28, 880 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 27 cm W: 125 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.4397 Giles, "Dated IV", 1036; Giles, Catalogue,

Vaiśravana is the only one of the four Guardian Kings to be depicted on his own (see cat. 22) and, although particularly linked with Khotan, was generally seen as a protector of states. He is shown here (cat. 94) not in his usual pose with a demon underfoot but patrolling his domain north of Mount Sumeru. A purple cloud supports him as he crosses a lake with his attendants and holding his customary lance and stupa. A painting with the same theme in the Stein collection (The British Museum, 1919,1010,0,26) was interpreted by Waley as Vaiśravaṇa on his way to relieve the Arab siege of Anxi (present-day Kucha), one of the four Chinese garrisons on the Eastern Silk Road. The story is told in the Pishamen yigui 毘沙門儀軌 (Rules for Worship of Vaiśravana).

'The Emperor said to the Dhyana-master Yixing: "Reverend Sir, Anxi is besieged by the Arab Kang Wuguo and I have issued a proclamation appealing for soldiers. But Anxi is twelve thousand leagues away and it takes an army eight months to get there; so I cannot really do anything to help matters." Yixing replied: "Why does not your Majesty ask Vaiśravana, the Devaraja of the North, to relieve the besieged?". ... In the fourth month news came from Anxi that ... in the second month ... three hundred leagues to the north of Anxi there had appeared a heavy cloud, athwart the darkness

of which there loomed the figure of a man some ten foot high with many hundred companions all clad in metal armour. ... Kang Wuguo was much alarmed. He withdrew all his armies, ordering the troops back to their camps and entrenchments. There they found all their bow strings had been eaten through by golden mice."

Although 'not killing' was the first of the Five Prohibitions of Buddhism and killing one of the Ten Major Sins, Demiéville quotes the Mahāprajnapāramitāpodeśa to show the ambiguity in the position of Mahāyāna Buddhism towards killing and war; 'since there is no real being, there is no sin of murder, and since there is no murder, there is no prohibition of murder.'2 He argues that 'Mahāyāna praises life and this leads to it finding excuses for murder and even glorifying it'3 and points out that in China there were several popular revolts of Buddhist inspiration and records of monks who joined in military actions. The main justification was the need to defend the True Dharma and Vaiśravana was central in this: several sutras or rituals of Vaiśravana relate to war.

As Guardians of the Dharma it is not surprising that the four Guardian Kings are almost always depicted as fierce armed warriors. The two shown here (cats. 95, 96) while dressed in armour and standing on demons,



98 Wooden buckle from a harness

1st century BC to 3rd century AD Stein, 3rd expedition: Loulan Wood and hemp-like fibre 1: 11.5 cm The British Museum, 1928, 1022,20 (L.C.iv.02) Stein, Innermost Asia, 246, 254, pl. 29



99 Cavalryman

Museum, 87.121

C. 701 Excavated 1972 from Prince Yi De's tomb (d. 701), Qianxian County, Shaanxi Pottery with pigments and gilt H: 35 cm L: 32 cm Shaanxi Provincial History

Fig 25 Victory procession of the Chinese loyalist General Zhang after his defeat of the Tibetan forces ruling Dunhuang. Dunhuang, Cave 156. Courtesy of the Dunhuang Academy.

are both quite restrained. Their similarities to a pre-tenth-century wall painting in Yulin Caves near Dunhuang and their style, says Whitfield, suggests a ninth-century date, which would mean they might have been painted when the Tibetans controlled the Southern Silk Road.

The first Tibetan empire was a formidable military force and held border skirmishes and major battles with China throughout the seventh and eighth centuries, sometimes joining forces with the Turks to their north. The wars were punctuated with periods of peace governed by treaties sealed by alliances between the imperial families of the two empires: a Chinese princess was sent to marry the Tibetan emperor *Srong-brstan-sgamn-po* in 640 while Tibetan princes were sent to be educated in China. The Chinese histories noted the military prowess of their neighbours:

'There are hundreds of thousands of men ready to bear arms ... and a watch-post every hundred *li*. Their armour and helmets are excellent. When they put them on their whole body is covered, with holes just for the eyes. Their bow and sword never leave them. ... Military discipline is strict. In battle it is not until the troops in front have been completely wiped out that the troops behind come into line. §

The Chinese withdrawal of its troops from the Silk Road garrisons following internal rebellion in 755 left the Tibetans free to move in. They conquered most of the Southern Silk Road over the next two decades, establishing firm control over Khotan and Dunhuang, and even reached the Chinese capital itself in 763. But they had as much need as China to call on Buddhist protectors. In 751 the Arab caliphate to the west had conquered Samarkand and other Sogdian towns to the west and formed an alliance with the Turks to their north-east

to defeat the Chinese at the battle of Talas River. To the north a confederation of Turkic tribes, the Uighurs, had formed a powerful empire which became rich through the silk given by China nominally for horses but, in reality, in return for the Uighurs' military help in defeating the Chinese rebels and to deter them from unleashing their military force on China. And to the south the Tibetans sought to move into the Pamirs and the plains of India.

The Tibetans remained a formidable force for 250 years but by the mid-ninth century the first Tibetan empire started to fall apart. The Chinese Tang dynasty was also in decline but the two countires skirmished again as shown by cat. 97. The copying of this popular Avalokiteśvara-sūtra was paid for by a Chinese soldier who explains his actions at the end: 'On the sixteenth day of the fourth month of the first year of Guangming, Liang Ju, Cavalry Officer of the Fifth Frontier Garrison at Liangzhou in the Tianping (Heavenly Peace) Army, caused this sutra to be copied in fulfillment of a vow made while on military service in the heart of Tibet.' Avalokiteśvara was a saviour of those in trouble and so it is probable that the soldier prayed to the bodhisattva while in a difficult situation, promising at the time to copy the sutra if he was saved. This was not a meaningless vow: paper of this quality and a scribe with a good hand were not cheap.

The Chinese had learned their horseriding skills from their western neighbours of necessity: the mounted nomads were faster and superior and the Chinese army had to adopt the same skills or be defeated. Chariots were in use by the second millennium BC and, as clearly seen from the remains of Qin Shihuangdi's tomb warriors in Chang'an (present-day Xian), the Chinese army had cavalry divisions by the third-century BC. Cat. 98 is a wooden harness buckle, one of several

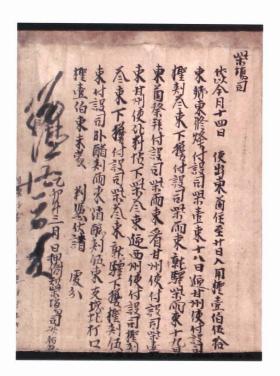
trappings for horses found by Stein in the Lop Desert dating from the Kroraina period. A thousand years later the men and women of the Tang aristocracy played polo wearing the then-fashionable 'foreigner's dress' (*hufu*) of loose trousers and a split gown (see cats. 174, 175, 176).

The Suishu (History of the Sui) describes the dress of the Chinese cavalry in the seventh century: 'The first cavalry battalion of each army wore "bright-brilliant" armour joined with dark green cords: they had iron horse armour with dark green tassels and were distinguished by lion banners.'6 The other battalions wore different colours and had different animals on their banners. Banners, infantry and cavalry can be seen in Fig. 25, a depiction of the victory procession of General Zhang and the Chinese loyalist army in 868 after they had driven the Tibetans from Dunhuang. Cat. 99 is a model of a Tang cavalryman from the tomb of the emperor Taizong's eldest son, Prince Yi De who died in 701. The soldier and his mount are both wearing scale armour.

- 1 Quoted in Waley, Paintings, no. 26. For other occurrences of the rat/mice story see cat. 26.
- 2 Demiéville, "Buddhism and War", 352–53, after Lamotte.
- 3 Ibid. 353.
- 4 Whitfield, Art,
- 5 Quoted in Snellgrove, A Cultural History, 29.
- 6 Graff, Warfare, 147 from n.46.



Preparing for Battle (cats. 100-105)





100 Official reports

Guiyijunshi, 368-69

955? (yimao year) Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 30.9 cm w: 127.3 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.3728 Giles, Catalogue, 7511; Mair, "Lay Students", 57; Yingzang, 5: 152-53; Rong Xinjiang,

101 Tibetan hill-station woodslip

8th to 9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Mazar-tagh Ink on wood H: 1.8 cm W: 11.2 cm D: 0.3 cm The British Library, IOL Tib N 1107 (M.Tagh.006) Thomas, Tibetan Literary Texts, 255; Wang and Chen, Tufan

102 Tibetan hill-station woodslip

8th to 9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Mazar-tagh Ink on wood H: 1.8 cm W: 12 cm D: 0.4 cm The British Library, IOL Tib N 1541 (M.Tagh.a.II.0065) Wang and Chen, Tufan

103 Tibetan hill-station woodslip

8th to 9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Mazar-tagh Ink on wood H: 1.6 cm W: 10.4 cm D: 0.3 cm The British Library, IOL Tib N 1111 (M.Tagh.0010) Thomas, Tibetan Literary Texts, 231; Wang and Chen, Tufan

104 Tibetan hill-station woodslip

8th to 9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Mazar-tagh Ink on wood H: 1.8 cm W: 10 cm D: 0.4 cm The British Library, IOL Tib N 710 (M.I.xiv.124) & 715 (M.I.xiv.129)

Thomas, Tibetan Literary Texts, 129-30; Wang and Chen, Tufan



105 Circular in the Mobile Guards of Shensha District

10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 30 cm W: 20 cm The British Library, Or 8210/S 1150 Giles, Catalogue, 7621p; Yingzang: 2, 244; ADD, 674-79

The oasis kingdoms and garrisons of the Silk Roads were vulnerable both to raiders from the mountains and to invading armies. A system of defensive walls - limes - punctuated by beacon-towers was established by the Chinese from the first century BC to relay early warning of marauders and invaders. The original defensive structures were excavated by Stein and he mapped over fifty miles of these Dunhuang limes with beacon towers at regular intervals. The towers relayed advance warning of attacks by fire signals and this system continued throughout the first millennium. Cat. 100 is a series of reports from the Fuel Depot Controller concerning the consumption of bundles of tamarisk at the fire-signal stations and probably dates to 955. The reports are all guaranteed with a signature which is found on several of the documents from Dunhuang and resembles a bird (see cat. 87).

As Takeuchi discusses in his essay here (pp. 50-56), the Tibetans established a similar system of hill stations when they moved into the Silk Road in the mid-eighth century. The Chinese histories record Tibetan stations as being 100 li apart (between 20-35 miles). The many woodslips excavated from the Tibetan forts of Mazar-tagh and Miran supply considerable information on the manning of these outlying stations.

Cat. 101 is a tally stick in the first stage of production, giving the name of the hill station only, painted red and with a string hole on the left. At the next stage, a triangular piece is cut out and several long notches are cut across the strip, with small notches cut just at the top. After this a small wedge was cut out (see cat. 102). When a group of soldiers was sent out to a hill station they took the small wedge as a tally. They were regularly supplied with provisions from the main supply depot by a courier who carried with him the master woodslip. The courier could then demand the wedge and match it against the master, using the shape and the notches, to ensure the identity of the watchman. The courier took back the master slip as a receipt; the short notches probably indicate the amount of provisions received. Sometimes a message from the watchmen was written on the back of the master slip, such as in cat. 103 where they are complaining about a shortfall in the provisions: 'We have not received six bre of barley: [we hope we] will receive [them] later.'

The watchmen were usually sent in groups of four, the commander and deputy commander always being Tibetan, while the two cooks were either Khotanese or Tibetan. In some cases, such as cat. 104, only three members are listed: Takeuchi suggests this may indicate that one of the Khotanese had deserted. The three soldiers listed here are all from the Sumpa horn1 in the Amdo region to the northeast of Tibet.

Cat. 105, a document from Dunhuang probably dating to the tenth century, concerns local defence forces raised from the local population. It is a circular addressed to the 'unattached mobile guards of Shensha District'. Shensha district was under the administration of Dunhuang and was the area of dunes south of the town also known as 'the singing sands'. The guards are instructed to assemble at the yin hour (3-5 am) in the Great Granary bringing spears, shields, bows and arrows under penalty of a heavy fine of wheat. The granary would have been a target for marauders; there are several documents telling of raiders who took people as well as food.2 And during Chinese control of the Eastern Silk Road, the Chinese fields next to the border region east of Dunhuang were ironically called the Tibetan grain store because of the success of Tibetan incursions. Presumably the mobile guards also had a police role as well, protecting the granary against local thieves.

¹ Tibet was originally divided into four horns with two additional ones added later. For Supiya/Sumpa see p. 42 fn. 11.

² See, for example, the case of Widow Ah-long whose uncle had to stop working her land to pursue armed bandits from the mountains. The squatter who took possession had been abducted as a child and brought up by men from the mountains.

Into Battle (cats. 106-109)



106 Lokapāla or Guardian King

Late 8th or early 9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Ink and pigments on silk н: 60 ст w: 18.5 ст The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.126 (Ch.0095) Stein, Serindia, 957, pl. 83; Waley, Paintings, no. 126; Whitfield, Art, 2: 60





107a-c Painted figurines of soldiers

7th to 8th century Excavated in 1973: Astana, Tomb 230 Pigments on clay н: 27.5-32.5 ст Xinjiang Museum, 73TAM230: 21, 29, 41 Tianshan, 196

108 Soldier with shield and spear

6th to 7th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Ming-oi Stucco with traces of pigment and wood н: 42.8 ст The British Museum, MAS 1061 (Mi.xii.0010)/1065 (Mi.xii.0015/0017) Stein, Serindia, 465, 1193, 1209ff, pl. 135; Whitfield, Art, 3: 98; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, no. 150

Scale armour was in common use among the armies of the Silk Road throughout the first millennium, both for men and for their mounts (see cat. 99). The Stein collection of paintings from Dunhuang includes twentyfour showing Lokapāla or Guardian kings wearing scale armour representative of the style of the period and place - just as the architecture and clothing shown in Buddhist paintings from Dunhuang usually follow Chinese rather than Indian models. The

Lokapāla shown in cat. 106, although not standing on a demon, carrying no weapons (hence the inability to identify him) and entirely non-grotesque, is still wearing scale armour similar to that worn by the contemporary cavalryman (cat. 99) and the three infantry guards (cats, 107a-c).

Cat. 108 shows a soldier, shield and armour all found in separate locations in the Ming-oi shrine near Gaochang in a Buddhist shrine. The soldier originally formed part of a frieze of stucco sculptures of soldiers, presumably defending the Dharma. They had been fastened to the wall on a wooden framework and were painted, the armour - which may depict metal scales - in red and green. Whitfield suggests that there are many Sasanian elements in this figure, particularly the coat with wide lapels.

Some few examples of discarded scales of armour survived for over a thousand years in the rubbish heap of Miran fort for Stein to uncover - most suits of armour would have been taken with the soldiers when they left. Contemporary records also mention metal armour and excavated scales have been found on the Eastern Silk Road. The examples found in Miran fort by Stein, a sample is shown in cat. 109, are, however, leather covered with lacquer which added strength, colour and design. Leather scales are known in China from at least the first millennium BC but these are important for being the earliest examples of carved lacquer, as Whitfield points out.





Fig. 26 Depiction of a battle from the Dunhuang Caves.

Dunhuang, Cave 12. Courtesy of the Dunhuang Academy

Life in the Fort (cats. 110–115)

110 Tibetan recycled woodslip

8th to 9th century Stein, 3rd expedition: Mazar-tagh Ink on wood H: 2.2 cm W: 11.8 cm D: 0.2 cm The British Library, IOL Tib N 1407 (M.Tagh.0595)

111 Tibetan recycled woodslip

8th to 9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Miran fort Ink on wood H: 2.3 cm W: 6.2 cm D: 0.4 cm The British Library, IOL Tib N 693 (M.I.xiv.97)

112 Tibetan recycled woodslip

8th to 9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Miran fort Ink on wood H: 5.9 cm W: 5.9 cm D: 0.3 cm The British Library, IOL Tib N 1096 (M.I.lviii.008)



113 Stripy wool bag

8th to 9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Miran fort Wool L: 27 cm The British Museum, MAS 1128 (M.I.xxvii.009) Stein, Serindia, 466, 484



114 Leather pouch

8th to 9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Miran fort leather 1:7 cm The British Museum, MAS 594 (M.I.0076) Stein, Serindia, 466, 478

115 Felt bag

8th to 9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Miran fort Felt with string L: 14 cm w: 16.5 cm The British Museum, MAS 615 (M.I.xiii.001.a) Stein, Serindia, 466, 482, 967





Takeuchi argues that the Tibetan soldiers quartered in the fort at Miran would have moved there with their families and so formed a large community with some home comforts. But the remains of the fort give little evidence of these. All articles of any value were removed when the Tibetans withdrew. Instead Stein found numerous discarded and obsolete documents among the rubbish heaps filling the small mud-wall rooms, along with various broken everyday objects.

Wood was a convenient material for military tallies, hill-station slips and other ephemeral documents for military administration. Where there is water - above or underground - there are thriving woods among the desert sands, consisting mainly of poplar. But the fact that Stein's finds included many wood slips which had been recycled into everyday objects suggests that supplies of wood were limited - or at least reserved for the documents and other military needs. Cats. 110 and 111 show woodslips fashioned into a spatula and knife. Cats. 112, with a rounded burned end is what Takeuchi rather quaintly calls a 'toilet scraper'. It is worth recalling Stein's description of his excavations at Miran:

'From a single small apartment, measuring only some eleven by seven feet, and still retaining in parts its smoke-begrimed wall plaster, we recovered over a hundred such pieces. ... An all pervading smell of ammonia brought home the fact that each of these little rooms, after being used as quarters by dirt-hardened Tibetan soldiers, must have also served them intermittently for purposes far more offensive.' (Ruins of Desert Cathay, 439-40)

Cats. 113, 114, 115 are all small bags retrieved by Stein from this site and fashioned from local products: felt and wool (for which neighbouring Khotan was renowned) and leather.

Life Under the Tibetans (cats, 116-119)





116 Census register

Early 9th century Acquired 1932, George Sherriff; from around Domoko Ink on paper H: 17 cm w: 28 cm The British Library, Or.11344/8 Skjærve, Khotanese, 111-12

117 Upkeep of roads

Early oth century Acquired 1932, George Sherriff: from around Domoko Ink on paper H: 26 cm W: 28.5 cm The British Library, Or.11344/3 Skjærvø, Khotanese, 107-9

Cats. 116-17 are two of eighteen Khotanese documents (Or.11344) which originally formed part of a large archive dating from the eighth and ninth centuries containing the correspondence and records of a few officials from the Six Villages: a term Stein was told was synonymous with Khotan.1 They were given to Sherriff together with a forged block print while he was stationed in Kashgar (1927-31) by Badruddin who had previously acquired manuscripts for Stein and Hoernle and were said

to have come from Domoko. Similar collections mentioning the same individuals, and sometimes even containing drafts of the same documents, are included in the Hedin Collection, Stockholm² and in St. Petersburg.³

Cat. 116 is a list of men and their duties. They are all working in the area of the Six Villages except for one who is in Tibet, and another who has gone to the 'Inner Fort' to sell cloth. Several are listed as absent and still owing, including five from the 'Young King,' (yauvarāya)4 and five as having defected. Skjærvø's essay here (see pp. 34-42) gives a translation of this document and a general account of duties of this kind.

In cat. 117 General Sudarrjum is acting as a result of reports submitted by persons returning from an inspection tour. It was of course vital for the military and merchants that the roads be kept clear and safe all along the Silk Road.

Translation (lines 1-6):

The spāta Sudārrjum orders thus: To the pharsa Sāmdara.

And now men ... They said to me thus: In Pa' the road back has thus become muttum. And so he [sent?] them to Birgamdara. ... the road is full of holes(?). What matter is there that the men are wasting days on working there? And he came (?) on a road ... ground ...

[When] you hear the order bring 10 men there. Order them to work there until they have finished. Load by load [bring?] reeds there. [There is] a pond in the .?. that debouches toward the town. Next, order them to put all the loads of reed (into it). ... (6) the ground becomes ... when thus the Masters' pack animals will be

Now (act) quickly so that you do not then say that: "I have not heard(?)."

This document illustrates the economic use of paper: the upper and lower sheets contain different documents in Khotanese (the second is dated regnal year 33), followed by a line of Tibetan. The two sheets were then stuck together and used for one continuous document on the other side, of which the last two lines continued onto the side on view, but the other way up.

USW

- 1 Ancient Khotan, 522. See Kumamoto, "Khotanese", 43-50 for a discussion of this term
- 2 Bailey, Khotanese Texts IV.
- 3 Emmerick and Vorob'yeva-Desyatovskaya, Saka Documents VII; Emmerick and Vorob'yeva-Desyatovskaya, Text Volume III.
- 4 This term also occurs in another document of the same period (Hed 18), dated regnal year 33 of an unnamed king. Presumably the meaning here is crown prince or heir apparent, though it has also been interpreted as vice regent, referring to Viśa' Vāham (763-784?), in another document, Or. 12637/21(3): 'regnal year 1 of the lord, the Young King' (see Skjærvø, "Kings", 265-66 and Kumamoto, "Khotanese documents", 37.



118 Letters home

Late 8th or early 9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Mazar-tagh Ink on paper H: 36 cm W: 27.75 cm The British Library, IOL Khot 41 (M.Tagh.a.i.0033) Stein, Serindia, 1456; Skjærvo, Khotanese,

Cat, 118 is a letter in Khotanese from Īramaña who is presumably stationed at Mazar-tagh under the Tibetans. The letter is addressed to his wife at home: '(I?), the spāta Īramaña embracing the earth (before my) wife, say: I ask you after Irasamga and the other children, Jsijsīya and Vilāya, and (our) other kinsmen, with small and big. I am fine here (and) in good health.' The main purpose of the letter is to give instructions for the harvest: 'take care that you have watered the grain in due time and that you have looked after the mastauña (fodder?). Look after the sheep and the other cattle so that you do not lose them. The pa'sīña pomegranates from Aśnesala(?), give them to ... so that they do not dry out.' Îramaña requests flour, sesame oil, crude sugar and felt to be brought to him. He also asks for his son Irasamga, '(though) it is a long way.'



119 Verses in praise of the Tibetan masters

c.806 Stein, 2nd expedition: Mazar-tagh Ink on paper H: 11.5 cm W: 28 cm The British Library, IOL Khot 50/4 (M.Tagh.b.ii.0065) Stein, Serindia, 1458; Skiærvø, Khotanese, 285; Skjærvø, "Kings of Khotan", 266

This metrical text in Khotanese was composed in the 16th regnal year of Viśa' Kīrtta who is described as the 'great Gracious Lord'.1 Its importance lies in linking Viśa' Kīrtta with 'the Master Tibetans, who are guarding this land of Khotan'. It describes a period of stability with an 'abundance of everything', mentioning a temple at Gara (the hill = Mazartagh?) to which two teachers have recently come.

When that good time was - at the time when that bhadrakalpika great gracious Lord took birth here, Viśa' Kīrtta, by the power of (his) merits.

(There is) abundance here in every thing because of the merits of the king, as well as because of the Master Tibetans, who are guarding this land of Khotan.

His sixteenth regnal year has passed. Great respect has arisen for him. Because of the honor of the watchers for the sake of promoting the Law,

he with faith (and) in love has invited thither, to Gara, two reverend ones. He at this time, at the beginning of the month of Rrāhaja

for the sake of the protection of the land (...) (So) strive there in the temple for one year well (and) uninterrupted(?), so that all sufferings disapppear! Utilities as many as they need, all of them he(?) has gathered for them here.

USW

¹ See Skjærvø's essay here (pp. 34-42) for a discussion and translation of this text.

Tantric Buddhism on the Silk Road (cats. 120-122)

120 Amitābha with the Eight Bodhisattvas

Early 9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and colours on silk H: 95 cm W: 63.5 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.50 (Ch.0074) Stein, Serindia, 954: Waley, Paintings, 50; Whitfield, Art. 1: 17; Yoritomi, "An Iconographic Study", 329–331



121 Tibetan Bodhisattva

10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and colours on paper H: 42.5 cm w: 26 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.168* (Ch.00377) Stein, Serindia, 993-94; Waley, Paintings, 168; Whitfield, Art, 2: 48



122 Manjuśri

9th century
Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang,
Cave 17
Ink and colours on paper
H: 66 cm W: 24.8 cm
The British Museum,
1919,0101,0.141 (Ch.0036)
Stein, Serindin; Waley, Paintings, 141;
Whiffold Art, 142

The concept of the 'bodhisattva' became central to the Buddhist teachings with the rise of the Mahāyāna. Earlier the term had been used to refer to the Buddha Śākyamuni in his previous lifetimes. Hundreds of stories from the Buddha's earlier incarnations as both human and animal were gathered in the popular didactic jātaka tales of early Buddhism. With the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism, the concept of the bodhisattva as a buddha-to-be was generalised and applied to others. Thus followers of the Mahāyāna would take the 'bodhisattva vow', a pledge to defer one's own enlightenment and remain in the world in order to benefit other beings. One who fulfils this vow is called a 'bodhisattva'.

Out of these Mahāyāna teachings emerged a set of eight bodhisattvas, deities who embodied the bodhisattva ideal. The figures included in the set varied widely between traditions, but the configuration that among most well known is depicted in cat. 120. Rectangular labels in Tibetan script identify each bodhisattva, though most are no longer legible. Based on these and the iconography, the eight figures can be identified as Maitreya in the upper left-hand corner, Avalokiteśvara in the upper right, and continuing in clockwise order: Nīvaranaviskambhin, Samantabhadra, Vajrapāņi, Ākāśagarbha, Mañjuśrī and Ksitigarbha. As is common in later paintings, the eight bodhisattvas are arranged around the central figure of the Buddha Amitābha. At the bottom can be seen a very small depiction of the painting's female donor. Based on certain stylistic similarities to other works found in Cave 17 at Dunhuang, this painting can be tentatively dated to the early to mid-ninth century - the period when the Tibetans controlled Dunhuang.

Cat. 121 depicts a single bodhisattva, and again Tibetan influence can be observed. The

painting bears close similarities to two others from Dunhuang, depicting the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara and the arhat Kālika respectively. The figure in the present painting is more difficult to identify. Most recently, it has been suggested that it may be the bodhisattva Ākāságarbha.1 At the bottom of the painting some Tibetan script appears, divided into three parts by vertical lines. On the left, the Tibetan seems scrambled but reads something like: 'Protector of the upwards direction, with a hūm [syllable] at his heart ... '. In the middle is a numeral probably indicating the painting's place in a series. On the right, the name of the artist appears: 'Te Göza Legmo drew this'. The feminine termination 'mo' suggests that the artist, or perhaps the sponsor as in cat. 120, was a Tibetan noblewoman.

Tradition associates some of the most well known bodhisattvas with particular qualities. Cat. 122 portrays Mañjuśrī, the bodhisattva of wisdom. In accordance with his typical iconography, Mañjuśrī is seen astride a white lion. The lion is shown roaring, evoking a standard trope in which the Buddhist doctrine is proclaimed by a lion's roar. The lion is led by a red rope held by an attendant dressed in an Indian dhoti. The painting is remarkable for its clear Indian style, proof that Indian modes of depiction continued at Dunhuang alongside those of China and other cultures.





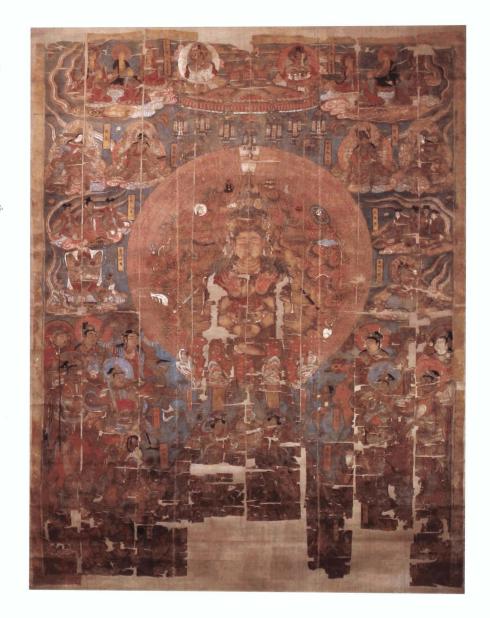


123 The eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara

10th century Stein 2nd expedition: Dunhuang Cave 17 Ink and pigments on silk н: 97 cm w: 74.3 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.63 (Ch.00102) Stein, Serindia, 2: 959-60; Waley, Paintings, no.63; Whitfield, Art, 2: 29

124 The Thousand-armed Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara

9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and pigments on silk H: 222.5 cm w: 167 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.35 (Ch.xl.008) Stein, Serindia, 2: 1077–79; Waley, Paintings, no. 35; Whitfield, Art, 1: 18





125 Avalokiteśvara mandala

8th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and pigments on hemp H: 84 cm w: 96 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.55 (Ch.xxii.0017) Stein, Serindia, 2: 1023-24; Waley, Paintings, no. 55; Whitfield, Art, 2: 38

126 Avalokiteśvara dhāraṇī

10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and pigments on silk H: 13.8 cm W: 17.3 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.248 (Ch.00151.t) Stein, Serindia, 2: 968; Waley, Paintings, no. 248; Whitfield, Art, 2; fig. 152

127 Mahāpratisarā dhāraņī

980 Stein 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and pigments on silk H: 41.7 cm W: 31.3 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.249 (Ch.xliii.004) Stein, Serindia, 2: 1044-45; Waley, Paintings, no. 249; Whitfield, Art, 2: fig.151; Fraser, Performing, 155, fig. 4.16

128 Tibetan prayer book

10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 15.3 cm W: 21.9 cm The British Library, IOL Tib J 76 (Ch.04)



125



Ludden Melen Handerschill Brown dar Marit Halacally dethirs. Marked Sohamich Ent 1 1 1 19 Handand wall mild Marganallan Banda Holgent dal

Edyloly metodadal Innational Amedianel Ba excelentalistal sydnings shipped Inchestings Avalokiteśvara, the embodiment of compassion, is one of the most popular of the Mahāyāna bodhisattvas. The ability of Avalokiteśvara to take any form in order to come to the aid of sentient beings is described in chapter twenty-five of the Lotus Sutra. This chapter, which circulated as an independent text, appears in dozens of Chinese manuscripts in the Dunhuang collections (cat. 185) and in two Tibetan manuscripts.

The theme of Avalokiteśvara's many manifestations was taken up in the tantras, in which the bodhisattva can be found in a number of forms. Two of the most popular are the eleven-faced form (cat. 123) and the thousand-armed form (cat. 124). The latter became popular through the Dhāranī Sutra of the Thousand-armed Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara, which was translated into several Central Asian languages (cat. 40).

The many hands and eyes of Avalokiteśvara represent his ability to perceive the suffering of sentient beings throughout

the realms of existence, and to reach out and help them. Other popular tantric forms are Cintāmanicakra, 'he who holds the wheel and the wish-fulfilling jewel' (fig. 27), and Amoghapāśa, 'the unfailing noose' (cat. 125). The noose is a symbol of the bodhisattva's ability to keep sentient beings from falling into the realms of hell.

Several Tibetan texts from Dunhuang on death and the after-death state instruct the dying to call on Avalokitesvara in order to avoid being reborn in the hells or the animal realm. These texts seem to have been important in the conversion of Tibetans to Buddhism, as funeral rituals were central to the indigenous Tibetan religion.

Avalokiteśvara was also called upon to help with more worldly problems, such as curing illness or bringing rain. In the tantric literature, Avalokiteśvara is invoked through the repetition of Sanskrit syllables called dhāranī or shorter syllable combinations known as mantras. Dhāraṇī printed on sheets of paper were considered to have magical properties of protection. These often featured images of a deity at the centre of a circle of dhāraṇī syllables. For example, cat. 126 contains a line-drawing of Avalokitesvara in the centre of a printed dhāranī written in both Chinese and Sanskrit. Other less wellknown tantric deities were also featured in these printed dhāraṇī, such as the goddess Mahāpratisara who appears in cat. 127.

These tantric manifestations of Avalokiteśvara became popular in China and Tibet in the eighth to tenth centuries. In the Dunhuang wall paintings, there are more tantric images of Avalokitesvara than of all the other tantric deities put together. These tantric forms of the bodhisattva largely disappeared in China, where the non-tantric forms were always more popular. See for example the depiction of Avalokiteśvara as the succourer of those in trouble (cat. 184) and in the form known as 'the moon in the water' (cat. 239). In Tibet, by contrast, the tantric forms of Avalokitesvara became more and more popular.

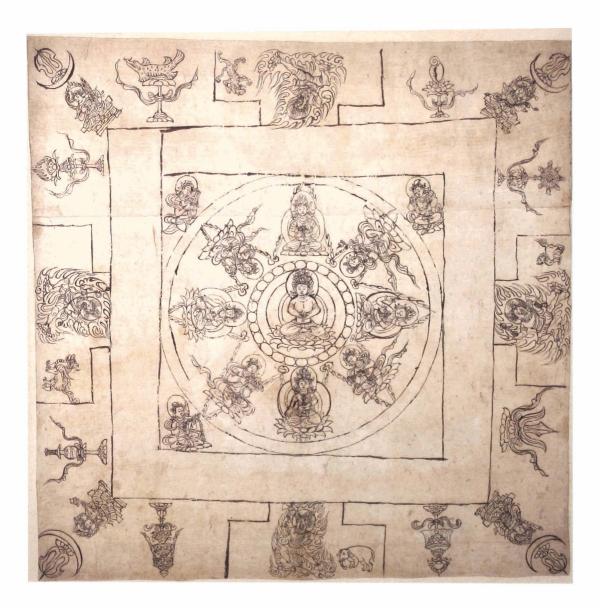
This booklet (cat. 128) contains several Buddhist texts in the Tibetan language, and probably belonged to a monk living in the tenth century. One of the texts is a prayer to the Avalokiteśvara Cintāmanicakra. This form of Avalokiteśvara has six arms, which symbolize the six kinds of sentient beings: hellbeings, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, demigods and gods (see cat. 297). He is sitting on a moon disc and a jewelled lotus, at the centre of a mandala. The mandala is said to represent the pure nature of the mind:

If you meditate on this mandala of mind itself, The equality of all mandala, Conceptual signs will not develop; Conceptualization is itself enlightenment.

Here we have an example of the full development of the tantric Avalokitesvara into the embodiment of the enlightened mind itself. The Tibetan texts concerning Avalokiteśvara show the beginnings, in the ninth and tenth century, of the popular cult of this bodhisattva in Tibet. By the twelfth century Avalokitesvara was taken to be the patron deity of Tibet, and since the seventeenth century the Dalai Lamas have been seen as his emanations.



Fig. 27 Cintămanicakra from a Dunhuang painting The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.61



129 Sketch of a Vajradhātu maṇḍala

Late 9th or early 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 44.8 cm w: 43.2 The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.173 (Ch.00428) Stein, Serindia, 2: 999–1000; Waley, Paintings, no. 173; Whitfield, Art, 2: fig.78; Klimburg-Salter, The Diamond Path: 144



131 Silk banner depicting Vajrapāni

Early 9th century Stein 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and pigments on silk H: 55.0 cm W: 14.5 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.103 (Ch.lvi.002) Stein, Serindia, 862, 1074, 1474, pl. 88; Waley, Paintings, no. 103; Whitfield, Art, 1: 48; Farrer and Whitfield, Caves, no. 36

A follower of the Vajrayana, 'the vehicle of the vajra', must receive empowerment before he or she can engage in the meditation practices derived from the tantras. The empowerment ritual is analogous to the coronation of kings in ancient India, in which a prince received empowerment (abhisekha) as king with dominion over a circle (mandala) of vassals of different families (kūla). Similarly, in the tantric ritual the adept is empowered as a buddha, with dominion over a circle of buddhas, each from a different buddha family.

Once empowerment has taken place, the adept can practice meditation techniques of identification with the buddha at the centre of the mandala. The mandala shown here (cat. 129) is known as the Vajradhātu, 'the realm of the vajra', and is taken from the Sarvābuddha-tattvasamgraha-tantra. This tantra appeared in India in the seventh century, and was translated into Chinese in 753. The tantra established the standard pattern for mandalas: a central buddha surrounded by four buddhas in each of the four directions. Here the central buddha is Vairocana. In the four cardinal directions are the other four buddhas, Aksobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha and Amoghasiddhi. In the four intermediate directions are four goddesses making offerings. The kings of the four directions occupy the corners of the mandala, and four fierce guardians are situated at the mandala's gates. This drawing was probably intended as a teaching guide or a personal aid to the visualization of the mandala.

The implement (cat. 130), is made from reinforced paper attached to a wooden stick. The deity depicted here holding a vajra and a bell and wearing a crown displaying the five buddhas, is probably Vajrasattva, who represents the vajra family of buddhas in the Vajradhātu mandala. This implement may have been intended for use in an empowerment ceremony. It bears some resemblance to Tibetan tsagli, illustrated cards which are used in empowerments.

The banner painting (cat. 131) shows the bodhisattva Vajrapani, another member of the vajra family. Two Tibetan inscriptions appear on the back, one of which is a rough phonetic transcription of the deity's name (ba ca ra pang ne). This and the lack of Chinese stylistic influence suggests that the image may have been painted during the period of Tibetan occupation, or brought to Dunhuang from elsewhere.

Vajrapāņi first appears in the early Buddhist tradition merely as a benign demon (yaksa), but in the Sarvābuddhatattvasamgraha-tantra he is a symbol of the state of buddhahood itself. In this tantra Vajrapāni has a special role as the conqueror of Hindu deities, especially Siva and his consort Uma. When Vajrapāņi is depicted in wrathful mode, he is shown trampling on Siva and Uma. In the tantra, this violent treatment results eventually in the conversion of Śiva and the other Hindu deities to Buddhism.2

This tantric practice derived from the Sarvābuddha-tattvasamgraha-tantra and similar texts came to be known by the name of Yoga tantra. They developed in India, and quickly became popular in China, Tibet and Khotan in the eighth and ninth centuries. From the ninth century a later development of tantric practice known as Mahāyoga became predominant in India and Tibet (see pp. 63-71, cat. 132), but was never popular in China. Yoga tantra also declined in China, but survived to the present day in Japan as the main focus of the Shingon school.

SvS

- Davidson, Indian Esoteric Buddhism, 122.
- 2 Snellgrove, Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, 134-41.

130 Ritual implement for empowerment

9th or 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Pigments on paper and wood н: 18.2 cm Diameter: 11 cm British Library, IOL Tib J 1364 (Ch.73.X)



132 Tantric Ritual Manuals

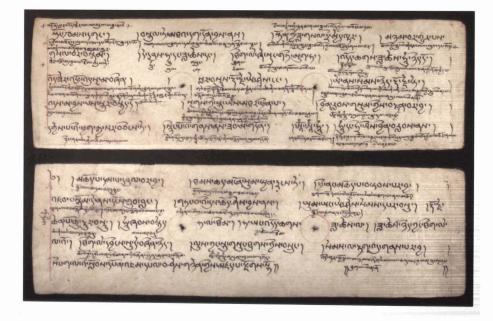
10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 30 cm W: 9 cm The British Library, IOL Tib J 331 (Ch.73.iii.17) Eastman, "Mahayoga Texts"; Dalton, "The Development of Perfection"

Dated to the tenth century on the basis of content, orthography, and the bundle in which it was discovered, this is a collection of three ritual manuals based on the class of Buddhist tantras known as Mahāyoga ('Greater Yoga'). The first text, entitled A Ritual Manual for the Body, Speech, and Mind, describes a brief purification rite that is attributed to the Indian master Manjuśrī mitra. This master was an influential eighthcentury scholar of Buddhist tantra, with a particularly close connection to Manjuśri, the bodhisattva of wisdom. He continued to be an important figure for Tibetan Buddhists, especially those of the Nyingma ('Ancient') school.

The second text, entitled A Ritual Manual for Generating Good Fortune is based on the Guhyasamāja Tantra, a canonical tantra that has exerted a strong influence on Tibetan Buddhism for the past twelve centuries. The rite described is an early example of the sexual yoga for which tantra has become infamous in the west. The ritual technologies associated with tantric sexual practice reached their final forms in India around the late ninth century. Here we catch a glimpse of these practices at an early point in their development.

The third text, which lacks a title, is a ritual manual for subjugating demons and harmful spirits. The rite focuses on the Buddhist deity Vajrakīlaya, a wrathful personification of the ritual dagger (kīla) that is used in tantric rites to pin down troublesome spirits. Such rites are usually performed at the beginning of a ceremony to prepare the ritual site.

IPD



133 Tibetan Ramayana

9th to 10th century Ink on paper Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 The British Library, IOL Tib I 737.1 (Ch.80.ix.3)

Thomas, "A Ramayana Story": de Jong, "Un frae ment"; de long, "The Tun-huang Manuscripts"; de long, The Story of Rama

One of the most surprising finds among the manuscripts of the Dunhuang Library Cave was a group of manuscripts containing the story of the Indian hero Rama in the Tibetan language.1 The discovery of a Tibetan Rāmāyana was surprising because Classical Tibetan literature is almost entirely Buddhist in character.2 Yet this Ramayana was a retelling of the Indian tale with no attempt to apply a Buddhist interpretation.3

The Rāmāyaṇa is one of India's two great epic tales, along with the Mahabharata. It tells the story of the abduction of King Rāma's wife Sītā by the demon Rāvana. Rāma rescues Sītā with the help of the monkey king and his army, and the particularly resourceful monkey Hanuman. The nucleus of the tale probably dates back to the middle of the first millennium BC. The first Ramavana, attributed to the poet Valmiki, drew on already-existent epic and sacred literature. Since then, many other versions have been composed, some more popular than others.

Although there are many variations among the Indian versions of the Ramayana, the Tibetan version differs in several important respects from all of the Indian versions. It is a condensed retelling of the story and many episodes, such as Rāma's final battle with Rāvaṇa, are drastically shortened. On the other hand, certain episodes are given a fuller treatment in the Tibetan version. For example, in the Indian versions when Rāma sends Hanuman to Sītā while she is in captivity, Hanuman takes Rama's ring to show to Sita. In the Tibetan version, Hanuman also takes a love letter written by Rāma to Sītā, and Sītā sends back a love letter in reply. In another epistolary episode, Rāma chides Hanumān for forgetting to correspond regularly. Hanuman laments, 'I should have continually enquired by letter after your health.' Letter-writing was not a part of ancient or medieval Indian culture, so this version of the Ramayana seems to originate from outside of the Indian cultural area.

Two Khotanese manuscripts containing fragments of the Rāmāyaņa have been identified as possible sources for the Tibetan Ramavana, However, while the Khotanese story contains some of the same elements as the Tibetan, it also differs from the Tibetan in many respects. There are no epistolary episodes in the Khotanese version, and the

whole story is given a Buddhist gloss at the end, like the jātaka tales which were so popular in Khotan (see cat. 40).

The Tibetan Ramayana is entirely without any attempts to apply a Buddhist gloss to the story. In fact, it is rather less moralistic than the Indian versions, in which Rama and Sītā are ultimately estranged due to Rāma's suspicion of Sītā's infidelity. The Tibetan version inserts a happy ending, in which Rā ma's apology is accepted by Sītā: 'They were happier than besore. King Rāma, Queen Sītā, husband and wife and the sons together with a large retinue lived happily in the palace Old Earth.'

The influence of the Rama story on later Tibetan literature was slight. Scholars have noted the reappearance of the demon Rāvana in the rediscovered treasure (gter ma) literature of Tibet, but the demon has been removed from his original context in the Rāma story.5 In any case, the Rāmāyana was clearly too much rooted in the non-Buddhist culture of India to be accepted by a Buddhist Tibet.

SvS

- 1 The manuscripts are: IOL Tib J 737.1 (A and C), IOL Tib J 737.2 (B), IOL Tib J 737.3 (D), Pelliot tibétain 981 (E), Pelliot tibétain 983 (F). In de Jong's works, these manuscripts are referred to only by the letters A to F. so these have been given in brackets after the shelfmarks. Two other small fragments of the Rāma story are IOL Tib J 1197 and IOL Tib J 1200.
- 2 The later Bon literature of Tibet is also largely based on Buddhist doctines.
- 3 The Dasavatha Jātaka tells the story of Rāma's banishment from the kingdom by his father, King Dasavatha.
- These are discussed in Bailey, "Rama". 5 Stein, Etudes du monde chinois: 516-17.

as logation almost a good Dellows it hand and 3- Justus du ordination du du de du Seul Du o su ce Runay odjegruay of grandradud Rod sy dan gandradia Ha Den at Delman set Juddam, & as Boy of \$1 1 Ad so, As ay Jamary Justalahmand da 2 2 dal 12 1 Jaman and a Seconda odd it 15d o Flood 2 Add Janual god und indiad adaland had be नेया मिला चित्रे पूर्ण वीता । केप्सिक्सिक के क्रिके मानिक किया परिपाल परि The gradulation colon Willet shirt and Da Dat Alansigat Indianage इ.२म.वेर.इप.व्रायात्रीयात्राक्ष्यीयात्राक्ष्यीयात्राक्ष्यात्रात्रात्रात्रा Marginariarial man Daluard materiaria Fild only sex many conditalla James my na anstalakondanadal kon ostuvan oddana. ली अन्तर्यहैन विता निवाले निवह का भावता । एड्से के का निर्देशिया प्रति सेंच करें । रावार् अन्य नार्त्ता केंग्रिक नेंच कर नामित्र रेंच के के का का कर के का नामित्र के कि क्षेत्रके स्वार्ट्स श्रीमादी विकास के के किस किस का लास के रे ति वर्त से कुर से व वनतेत्र्यिमानाश्वरद्धात्रकात्रात्रात्र्यात्र्यात्र्यात्र्यात्र्यात्र्यात्र्यात्र्यात्र्यात्र्यात्र्यात्र्यात्र ्रेट्ट्रियम् क्रियम् वित्राम्य यात्राम्य म्यान्य त्राम्य वित्रा

The Evolution of the Book (cats. 134-141)

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134 Satasāhasrikā Prajnāpāramitāsūtra in Sanskrit

8th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on palm leaf 69 folios: н: 4.5 cm w: 50.5 cm The British Library, IOL San 866 (Ch.0079a) Stein, Serindia, 814n, 914, 1449-50; Zwalf, Buddhism, no. 64



135 Satasāhasrikā Prajnāpāramitāsūtra in Tibetan

Early 9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper 146 folios: н: 20 cm w: 73 cm British Library, IOL Tib J 105 (Ch.01.b)

Stein, Serindia, 1470, pl. 173-4; van Schaik, "Tibetan Dunhuang Manuscripts"



Fig. 28 Detail of a wall painting from Ming-oi on the Northern Silk Road and dating from the 8th to 9th century showing monks writing on pothi The British Museum, 1919,1-1.0279 (Mi.xiii.i)

हित्रक्ष-अस्टर्का सहका असंदेका सम्बद्ध Ladlaudentengantaninininingan hangan lessen number and and and algorithms and a भक्तिक का कु अंति कु का के ता वह के का के का में का में का संदर्भावाः . यश्रेत्र । श्रेत्र सर्वे स्त्रे त्रे त्रे स्त्रे क्ष्य स्त्र स्त्रे स्त्रे हे हे त्रे स् बैक्ट्र बैस्के के छ थ थे. हं बैस बैक्ट्र के क्ये के हु छ के स



136 Almanac for the year 59 BC in Chinese

Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang limes Ink on wood H: 23 cm W: 1 cm The British Library, Or.8211/26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 35 (T.vi.b.i.201, 36, 25, 63, 133, 234, 84) Stein, Serindia, 646-7, 762; Chavannes, Documents, 14-17; Oba, Tonko, nos. 179, 58, 47,

81, 132, 206, 97, pl. 19, 5, 4, 8, 13, 20, 9



137 Prajñāpāramitāsūtra in Chinese

6th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on silk H: 26.4 cm W: 13.6 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.5719 Giles, Catalogue, no. 1517



138 Ratnakūtapariprechasūtra in Chinese

8th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Ink on paper with wooden roller and stave and silk tie H: 27 cm W: 1150 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.351 Giles, Catalogue, no. 1568; Zwalf, Buddhism.





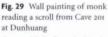
Silk Road. The original forms were dependant on availability, cost and suitability of materials. The first strand developed from the book in ancient India which was written on readily available palm leaves. This is the form in which many of the early Buddhist texts must have been transmitted from India along the Silk Road and cat. 134 is a copy of the Prajñāpāramitāsūtra in Sanskrit from Cave 17 at Dunhuang. This form is know as pothi or pustaka. The separate leaves were loosely bound together with a thread through one or two central string holes and wooden boards protected them. Tibet developed its own script by the eighth century and emulated the Indian form of the book but making use of paper which had been invented by its Chinese neighbours several centuries before. Tibetan was also written horizontally from left to right. Paper was obviously more flexible than palm leaves, and pothi of various sizes were produced, the maximum size restricted only the size of the paper-making frames. Cat. 135 is a typical pothī containing a Buddhist sutra in Tibetan. The Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in a

Two clear evolutionary lines of book development can be clearly traced on the Eastern

Hundred Thousand Verses (Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitāsūtra) is the longest of all the Perfection of Wisdom sutras. These sutras taught that all things are empty (śūnya) of inherent existence and have been popular wherever Mahāyāna Buddhism has flourished. They remain important for followers of Tibetan Buddhism today.

When Aurel Stein first examined the Library Cave in Dunhuang, he noticed eleven huge pothi volumes, each of which was nearly one and a half feet high, stacked up against the wall. Taken together, they contained over thirteen thousand folios. Like the one on display here, they were all Perfection of Wisdom sutras written in Tibetan. This is the earliest collection of Tibetan sutras known to exist anywhere in the world.

This sutra collection was written in one of the scribal centres which existed in the monasteries of Dunhuang (see also p. 299). In these centres the copying of scriptures was paid for by patrons hoping to gain religious merit. One of the official documents found in Dunhuang records a donation made to a local monastery by the Tibetan king Ralpachen,



Courtesy of the Dunhuang Academy

who ruled the Tibetan empire from 815 to 836.1 The donation was to fund the writing of eleven copies of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in a Hundred Thousand Verses. Three of these were to be written in Chinese, and eight in Tibetan. The folios on display here may well be among those that were copied for the king.

The second form of the book developed under Chinese influence. The earliest Chinese writing is found on oracle bones dating from the second millennium BC and bronze inscriptions of the late second and first millennium BC But in the second half of the first millennium silk and wood were both used as writing media. Silk, however, was expensive and a system was developed whereby long thin wood slips were bound together by string so that one group was the same size as a standard piece of silk. However, with the invention of paper in the first century BC, a new, cheaper and much more convenient writing material was available. Silk continued to be used but rarely, as in cat. 137, one of the few silk manuscripts from Dunhuang. Cat. 136 shows traditional woodslips dating from the first century BC and discovered by Stein at the Dunhuang limes. This group contains part of an almanac for 59 BC. The notches for the string which originally bound them together can still be seen. Chinese was written vertically - top to bottom - and right to left.

The initial standard size of paper sheets emulated the size of these wood slip 'sheets' but different standards were introduced over the following centuries. Many different fibres were used with bark from the paper mulberry tree and hemp (cannabis satavia) becoming the most common. The lightness and flexibility of paper meant that several panels could be glued together to form a long scroll. The end (left) of the scroll was attached to and wrapped around a finely finished thin wooden roller. The right end was strengthened with a thin wooden stave to which a coloured silk tie was attached with held the scroll secure. Cat. 138 is a typical example of a Tang dynasty scroll on fine paper which is dved with huangbo, a yellow dye from the bark of the Phellodendron amurense (Amur cork tree) which, in addition to colour, gave the paper water-repellant and insecticidal properties.2

At Dunhuang, which was open to Indian, Tibetan and Chinese influences, curious hybrids emerge such as cat. 139, a





139 Lankāvatārasūtra in Tibetan with commentary in Chinese

9th to 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and pigments on paper 211 folios: н: 28 cm w: 9 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.5603 Giles, Catalogue, no. 5591; Ueyama, Tonkō bukkyō, 113-6, 389-97



concertina. This contains a commentary to a Buddhist sutra written in Chinese in black in the usual orientation: top to bottom, right to left. In this sense the concertina is simply a folded scroll. But the interlinear lines of text in red contain the sutra in Tibetan, also written in its usual orientation: horizontally, left to right. If the concertina is oriented to read the Tibetan it resembles a pothi and there is even a string hole - although there is no need for string since the leaves are already joined.

The concertina, in turn, presages a new development in the Chinese line which we start to see from late ninth-tenth century onwards: the codex (see cats. 257-260).

However, the scroll form was not exclusive to China on the Eastern Silk Road. The earliest extant Buddhist manuscripts date from the first half of the first century AD and are from Gandhāra. They are written on birch bark - a readily available material in the Gandhāran area - and rolled into scrolls. Cat. 139 shows one such manuscript after delicate conservation work to flatten it.

Salomon discusses the features of this manuscript which include string holes where a margin was sewn about 0.5-1 cm in from the edge probably, Salomon hypothesizes, in order to strengthen and protect the edges on rolling. Several sheets of birch bark might be overlapped and glued together to form a longer scroll. The sewing holes, small fragments of thread and a knot from the original bark can be seen on this example.

The scrolls were referred to as pustaka, a late Sanskrit loan word from Iranian - the same word now used as an alternative to refer to the pothī format. Some scholars have suggested that the presence of this form in Gandhāra, which might be expected to adopt the Indian pothī form, was due to other influences, from east or west rather than south: Chinese or Greek. Salomon opts for the influence of Greek papyrus scroll, given Greek influence on Gandhāra during this period.3

There were also many side branches to the main evolutionary trunks including cat. 140, a letter from the king in the capital of



140 Kharosthi birch-bark scroll of Anavatapta-gāthā (Songs of Lake Anavatapta)

1st century Acquired by the British Library in 1994: Gandhāra Ink on birch-bark H: 154.8 cm W: 14.5 cm The British Library, Or.14915/4 Salomon, Ancient Buddhist Scrolls

141 Regal order on leather

3rd to 4th century Stein, 1st expedition: Niya Ink on leather H: 11.7 cm W: 23.1 cm The British Library, Or.8211/1553 (N.xv.88)

Stein, Ancient Khotan, 403, pl. 42; Boyer et al, Inscriptions, no. 272; Burrow, Translation, no. 272 Kroraina to a local governor of Niya written on the special leather stationary reserved for royal communiqués. This is a rare form but, by contrast, there are numerous manuscripts on wood, ranging from small Chinese and Tibetan wood slips and tallies used for military administration (cats. 101-104, 110-112), the double-wedge wooden envelopes with seals used by administrators at Kroraina (cats. 44-47, 74-77, 89), and the Khotanese envelopes (cats. 82, 83). Function, availability and cost were probably the major factors for the use of wood: the military hill-station tallies, double wedge tablets, and ingenious Khotanese boxes are all perfectly suited to their use

Until the late nineteenth-century manuscripts from the Silk Road were practically unknown. When documents were offered to the British and Russian Consuls in Kashgar by Islam Akhun, a Khotanese man, they had little reason to doubt his story of having found them in ruins in the desert sands, and they had little against which to compare the script and form. Cat. 142 is one of these manuscripts, sent to London and studied by Professor Hoernle. The script, which resembles Brāhmī (see right) was unknown and Hoernle spent some time trying to decipher it before Stein uncovered Islam Akhun as a forger in 1901. The strange fish-shaped codex with its copper pegs now seems out of place among the other Silk Road book forms, but early scholars did not have the benefit of this material for comparison: one of the forgers' assets. It is very different from the sophisticated forgeries of Dunhuang manuscripts which appear on the market today: but the forgers now have the advantage of being able to examine and copy from genuine manuscripts.





142 Brāhmī forgery by Islam Akhun

c.1896 Khotan Ink on paper H: 8 cm W: 12.5 cm The British Library, Or. 13873/58 (Hoernle collection M2) Stein, Ancient Khotan, 507-14; Sims-Williams 'Forgeries', 111-29

Cat. 142 is one of the resourceful Islam Akhun's first 'Brāhmī' forgeries which supposedly was discovered at the site Kara Yantak stuck to a skull and partly buried in a circular mound about two feet high. The text is in a cursive Brāhmī-type script, with Tibetanlooking ligatures, and arranged in columns. Comparison with a genuine Khotanese document in cursive script (cat. 54) shows that there are indeed similarities between the two scripts, but the letters in the forged manuscripts are aligned regardless of the sub and superscript vowels which should be positioned above and below the base line. Moreover the format of the manuscripts is based on the Indian pothī style books which were nearly always written in the formal sutra script used for Buddhist religious texts, whereas the cursive script mostly occurred in secular documents on single sheets or rolls.

¹ IOL Tib J 2294

² See Gibbs and Seddon, Ancient Chinese Colorants, for a discussion on this dye, including its chemical

³ See Salomon, Ancient Buddhist Scrolls, 101-4 for a summary of this discussion.

Languages and Scripts of the Eastern Silk Road (cats. 143–152)



143 Sogdian ephemeral manuscript from Dunhuang

Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 32 cm w: 25.5 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.1360 Sims-Williams and Hamilton, Documents turco-sogdiens, 77-79, pl. 17

Cat. 143 is an example of ninth-century Sogdian script. The orientation of the drawing suggests that at this period Sogdian, like Turkic in the same script, was written vertically from left to right rather than horizontally from right to left as, for example, in the Ancient Letters of the fourth century (cats. 191, 192). This document is written on the back of part of the Vajracchedikā in Chinese (Giles, Catalogue, no. 964). The text, which is largely incomprehensible, contains an obscure remark about the man pictured, who is referred to as Tämär Quš, a Turkish name meaning 'Iron bird', and a lady Yimkičor. He may perhaps be identified with a ruler of the same name, author of a Sogdian letter (Or. 8212/89) which Sims-Williams and Hamilton date from circumstantial evidence to c.885.



144 Parthian fragment in Manichaean script

8th to 10th century Stein, 3rd expedition: Gaochang Ink on paper H: 3.4 cm W: 3.3 cm The British Library, Or.8212/1872(c) (Kao.0106)



145 Turkish Tantric Uighur text

13th to 14th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Yarkhoto Ink on paper H: 17 cm; W: 14 cm The British Library, Or.8212/125 (Y.K.0015) Stein, Serindia, 1176



146 Turkic 'Book of predictions' in Runic script

Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper 29 folios: н: 13.1 cm w: 8.1 cm The British Library, Or.8212/161 (Ch.0033)

Stein, Serindia, 924, pl. 160; Tekin, Irk bitig; Thomsen, "Stein's manuscripts in Turkish 190-214; Hamilton, "Colophon de l' Irq bitig"

Cat. 146 is a Turkic omen text in Runic script which the Turks invented specifically for works in their own language, possibly as a deliberate reaction against the more usual 'Uighur' script which was derived from Sogdian. This work is in codex form, consisting of 58 pages, or 29 small sheets, which were glued together at the back. The first five leaves and the final three contain Chinese Buddhist texts. According to the Turkic colophon, the manuscript was copied in the year of the Tiger at the monastery (manistan) of Dayun Tang.

Each omen describes an event and ends with the words 'This is good' or This is evil', for example (prediction 35):1

A man went to the army (in war). On (his) way (back home) his horse became tired. (Then) the man met a swan. The swan placed (him) on its wings (and) flew up with him. (Thus) it brought him to his mother and father. His mother (and) his father rejoice (and) take pleasure, it says. Know thus: (The omen) is good.

USW



147 Judaeo-Persian letter from Dandan-Uilio

8th century Stein, 1st expedition: Dandan-Uilig Ink on paper H: 45.5 cm w: 38 cm The British Library, Or.8212/166 (D.XIII) Margoliouth, in Stein, Ancient Khotan,

Cat. 147 is a business letter, dating most probably from the second half of the eighth century AD.1 It was acquired by Stein in Rawak having been discovered in the ruin D.XIII2 at Dandan-Uiliq, part of a ruined complex where there was a Chinese Buddhist monastery and an Imperial garrison with a Chinese commander. The site was deserted about the end of the eighth century, perhaps following the collapse of the Chinese authority and the desiccation of the area, which indicate that the document is unlikely to be later than that time.

This is probably the oldest document of some length in any form of New Persian; it belongs to the same chronological layer as a group of very short inscriptions in JudaeoPersian on a rock at the site of Tang-i Azao. The letter from Dandan-Uiliq consists, as it now stands, of 38 lines, but the beginning and end of all the lines are missing. It is therefore impossible to obtain a continuous reading of the whole letter. Some of the vocabulary is not familiar, which makes it harder to translate the fragmentary text. The document includes references to trading sheep and the sale of garments.

We can only speculate about the circumstances that led to the letter being left in this place. It may have been carried by an itinerant trader, and could have been lost or stolen, or the person who carried it may have died while travelling when he stopped at this place. As this is an isolated find of a Judaeo-Persian letter, it seems unlikely that the recipient of the letter lived in Dandan-Uiliq or that there was a community of Jews in this area. At the same time, some of the unusual words in this letter indicate possible connection with a North-East-Iranian milieu, as might be expected.

Judaeo-Persian is defined as the type of Persian used by Jews and written most often in their own script, in Hebrew characters. The various early writings in Judaeo-Persian, which are known from the eighth century to the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century, do not belong to a single dialect of Persian, but display a fairly large variety of linguistic features. They are valuable for the history of the Persian language because, being the language of a minority, and using a script which was different from that established for Standard Persian, they often reveal forms of the Persian language which are not visible in the literary language of the same period. A relatively large number of Early Judaeo-Persian fragments have come to light in the collections of material discovered in the Cairo Geniza and in the collection of manuscripts made by Abraham Firkowicz and now kept in St. Petersburg.



148 Persian manuscript

14th century Stein, 3rd expedition: Karakhoto Ink on paper H: 19 cm W: 16 cm The British Library, Or.8212/1825 (K.K.viii.02.a) Stein, Innermost Asia, 444, pl. 137

Cat. 148 is a single leaf from a Persian work on the appointed times of day for prayer probably dating from the early fourteenth century. This fragment was found among debris at Karakhoto, Marco Polo's Etzina.

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- 1 The document was first published by Margoliouth, "An early Judaeo-Persian document". Improved readings were suggested by Salemann, "Po povodu jevrejsko-persidskago", Henning, "The inscriptions of Tang-i Azao", 341, n. 2-4 and "Mitteliranisch", 79-80. A new edition and translation were given by Utas, "The Jewish-Persian fragment". For further notes cf. Shaked, "Judaeo-Persian notes", 182, n. 25 and Lazard, "Remarques"
- 2 Stein, Ancient Khotan, 306-9.

149 Mongolian manuscript

18th or 19th century Stein, 3rd expedition: Etsin Gol Ink on paper H: 8 cm w: 24.7 cm The British Library, IOL Khot 211(1) (E.G.021.g) Poppe, 'Mongolian Manuscript Fragments', 88-95, pl. 3

Cat. 149 is a leaf from a Mongolian divinatory manual describing days unfavourable to various different kins of activities.1 This page refers to the Manjuširi-yin jiruqai, 'Manjuśri's drawing'. The two upper rows contain Tibeto-Mongolian digits; 1-12 for the lunar months, and, below each of these 9, 7, 5, 3, 4, 9 & 11 (these two in the same square), 17, 25, 23, 21, 13, 11 marking the inauspicious days. The text continues on the verso and is followed by five lines of Tibetan, enumerating the names of the months of the four seasons.

TISW

1 Information provided by Prof. G. Kara

150 Tocharian manuscript from Endere

7th to 8th century Stein, 1st expedition: Endere Ink on paper н: 8 cm w: 23.7 cm The British Library, Or.8212/163 (E.i.6) Stein, Ancient Khotan, 438, pl 109

Cat. 150 is a leaf from a manuscript in Tocharian B in Northern Turkestan Brāhmī cursive script. The text is a narrative work, almost certainly in verse, which refers to Buddhist legends1. While the majority of manuscripts in Tocharian A and B, two closely related languages belonging to the Indo-European language family, come from the Northern Silk route (Kucha, Yanqi and around Turfan), this one was discovered far away at Endere on the Southern route. It was one of two 'closely-packed rolls of paper'2 found at the foot of the central pedestal in the main temple cella. The other roll, still tied with a paper strip round its centre, contained nonconsecutive leaves of a Khotanese manuscript, illustrating the practice of using manuscript fragments as votive offerings: thirty-three small scraps of another Tocharian manuscript were also discovered in the same room.

USW

- 1 Information provided by Prof. G. Pinault.
- 2 Stein, Ancient Khotan, 425.







151 Central Asian copy of the Saddharmapundarīkasūtra in Sanskrit

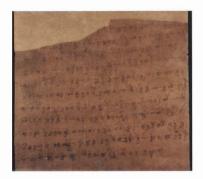
7th to 8th century Stein, 3rd expedition: said to have come from Domoko1 Ink on paper H: 8 cm w: 29.8 cm The British Library, Or.8212/1411 (Dom.0124)

Stein, Innermost Asia, 1019, pl. 121; Wille, Fragments2, pl. 36

Cat. 151 is a folio of the popular Saddharmapundarīkasūtra or Lotus Sutra in an early form of South Turkestan Brāhmī script. The manuscript originally comprised more than 350 folios, each folio consisting of two thin layers of paper pasted together. Leaves of this same manuscript are preserved in London, Munich and Berlin.

USW

- 1 Stein wrapper: "MS. Leaves brought by Badruddin Khan from Domoko 27.xi.13 0119-0124". Other leaves from the same manuscript have Stein's signature Khad., but as they were also acquired rather than excavated by Stein, they may in fact have come from the same site.
- 2 This work is a complete edition and translation of this manuscript with facsimiles.



152 Chinese-Khotanese phrasebook

10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 26 cm W: 385 cm The British Library, Or.8212/162 Skjærvø, Khotanese, 44-45; Takata, "Kotan-Kan" 204-6

Cat, 152 shows the first twelve lines of a scroll containing several Khotanese works. This text is a Chinese-Khotanese phrasebook containing sentences such as 'Where are you going?', 'Do you know Chinese?', 'Bring me vegetables'. The Chinese is transcribed into Brāhmī script, followed by the translation into Khotanese. There are several examples of Dunhuang Khotanese-Chinese phrasebooks written in Brāhmī script1, suggesting that there must have been a sizeable community of Khotanese in Dunhuang at this time, and that there were many travellers passing through from Khotan on their way to China (see cat. 277-9).

USW

1 For a similar Sanskrit-Khotanese bilingual conversation manual for travelling monks (P. 5538), see Kumamoto, "Seiiki-Rvokõsha-vou".

Considering the many different peoples who lived and travelled the length of the Silk Road, it is hardly surprising that written materials have survived in a large variety of languages and scripts. Apart from Chinese, the main scripts used in Central Asia are either derived from Aramaic,1 the administrative script used throughout the Achaemenid empire, or are different forms of the Indian Brāhmī script2 which may itself be ultimately derived from a Semitic source.

The Aramaic script was adapted by the Sogdians and early examples from the fourth century AD are the Sogdian Ancient Letters (cats. 191, 192). A developed form of the same script was used by the Sogdians several centuries later (cat. 143), and was also adapted by the Turks to form the so-called 'Uighur' script which continued in use until well into the Islamic period. The Mongolian script (cat. 149), created in the thirteenth century, is also derived from the same script.

Other Aramaic scripts in use in Central Asia were the Syriac script which was used by the Nestorian Christians and adapted for Christian texts in Sogdian and Turkic, and the Manichaean script, introduced by the prophet Mani himself, which was used widely for Middle Persian, Parthian, Sogdian and Turkic Manichaean texts (cat. 144). The Turks also developed a special Runic script (cat. 146) possibly as a deliberate reaction against the more usual Uighur script. There are two solitary examples of Persian in Pahlavi script, and one example of Judaeo-Persian (Persian in Hebrew letters) dating from the eighth century (cat. 147). With the advent of Islam in Central Asia,

the Perso-Arabic script became widespread (cat. 148).

The Kharosthī script, used for the Middle Indian language Gāndhārī, also owes its origin to Aramaic. Unlike other Indian languages, it was written from right to left. The earliest examples, written on birch-bark (cat. 140), probably date from the first century AD. In the third and fourth centuries we find many examples written on wood and leather from the kingdom of Kroraina (cats. 27, 28, 40, 44-46, 74-77, 89).

The other Indian script which was widely used in Central Asia is Brāhmī which exists in several varieties. Sander3 has distinguished between Indian Gupta, Turkestan Gupta, Early Turkestan Brāhmī and North and South Turkestan Brāhmī. North Turkestan Brāhmī is most familiar from the Indo-European language Tocharian (cat. 150), while South Turkestan Brāhmī is found in both formal 'sutra' (cat. 151) and several cursive varieties, and is the script of the Iranian language Khotanese. Examples of formal Khotanese are cats. 64, 66, 68 and 69, and there are many documents in cursive Khotanese shown throughout the exhibition. The Tibetan script, used from about the seventh century onwards, is of course, a development of Brāhmī. Cat. 135 is one of the earliest known manuscripts in Tibetan.

Brāhmī was occasionally adapted for other non-Indo-Aryan languages. Manuscripts in this script have been found in Sogdian, Tocharian, Turkic and Mongolian and Chinese (cat. 65 and 152).

USW

- 1 See articles by P.O. Skjærvø and G. Kara in Daniels and Bright, The World's Writing System, 515-58.
- 2 See R.G. Salomon in Daniels and Bright, ibid, 373-83.
- 3 Sander, Paläographische; also her "Brahmi Scripts" and "Remarks."

153 Tribute horse and camel

(see cat. 17)

9th to 10th century Ink and pigments on paper H: 30.5 cm W: 84.5 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.77 (Ch.00207)

Stein, Serindia, 976, 1338, pl. 96; Waley, Paintings, no. 77; Whitfield, Art, 2: 56, fig. 334; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, no. 61



Stein at Dunhuang (cats. 154-155)

Unlike Xuanzang, the seventh-century Chinese monk who had to sneak across the Chinese border east of Dunhuang in 649 under cover of darkness, Stein had official papers from the Chinese authorities for his explorations. However, both Stein and Xuanzang - like the pilgrim monks in cats. 13-14 - had to rely on local officials for transport, supplies, help with the general logistics of their travels and, at times, their personal safety. Stein's first port of call on arrival in a new town was therefore the Amban, or local magistrate.

In this letter to his great friend Percy Allen written on his first expedition (cat. 154) Stein notes that the Chinese officials are 'very pleasant people to meet - except when they ask one to dinner.' Hosting banquets continues to be an integral part Chinese etiquette and the logistics of obtaining supplies such a long way from home did not prevent Chinese officials serving delicacies such as birds' nest soup. Stein's general constitution was made of iron, but his stomach was his weakness: he suffered throughout his life with dyspepsia and would have preferred a cup of Dr Symington's Dessicated Pea Soup, rounded off with Cadbury's chocolate, to any banquet (see cat. 299).

On the same page, Stein notes the presence of 'treasure-seekers' who are sifting through the ancient ruins for artefacts to sell. Of course, it was the presence of explorers and archaeologists like Stein who were the main incentive for such activity. At the same time, Stein often felt he had no choice but to remove artefacts from excavated sites in order to guard against their further dispersal and possible loss in this way.

> the tourses as the cold which must daily be increasing now will permit I shall no lum to sites to be examined and the yearls of many a freasure see ker be lifted leaveling for and qui hies seems to have become quite a livelihood here. Thave had so las everyate tion shown to me by the Chinese officials who are very pleasant people to mest - ox lept when the they all know of old the has become quito country is perfectly quitt and will the authorities

154 Stein's letter to Percy Allen from Khotan

12 December 1901 Ink on paper H: 19 cm W: 12 cm The Bodleian Library, MSS Stein 1/xl

Stein also mentions Xuanzang, one of his own heroes and a figure recognized by all Chinese officials and scholars. The reference to the country being 'perfectly quiet' refers to the recent Boxer Rebellion. Stein was warned against travelling in China at this time because of the anti-foreign feeling; it did not stop him nor did he encounter any problems.

Seven years later when Stein arrived in Dunhuang on his second expedition in spring 1907 he still had to make the obligatory calls. Stein's initial interest at Dunhuang had been the Chinese Han period defences (he called them limes, using the Latin term) north and northwest of the modern-day town and he had some difficulty persuading the Chinese magistrate to find camels and labourers for his excavations. By the notebook entry shown here he had completed this task successfully - the camels and men had been found and he had returned to the town.

Cat. 155 shows the entry for June 9 when the local military officer, Stein notes, came to visit at 6am and stayed until 10.30am: hardly typical calling hours. By this time Stein had had several months of peripatetic Chinese lessons from his Chinese secretary, Jiang Siye, and was able to hold a conversation in Chinese. The town, Stein notes, was suffering from an epidemic. Stein's fever, however, was rather a recurrence of his malaria.

The following day he numbered all his negatives. 'Tao-shi' and his 'apprehensions' refers to Wang Daoshi, the self-styled guardian of the Thousand Buddha Caves (Ch'ien-fu-tung in Stein's romanization), southeast of Dunhuang. Wang had discovered a hidden Library Cave here in 1900 and had already given some of its contents to local officials in the hope of obtaining funds for his restoration work on the other caves. None had been forthcoming and when Stein arrived in 1907 he was able to negotiate and purchase from Wang, for a small sum, a large number of manuscripts and paintings from the Library Cave. These were the manuscripts he refers to on the same page: 'Boxes with MSS. (12) weigh inc. 900lbs.' He was trying to persuade Wang to part with more but to no avail, hence Wang's 'apprehensions.'

The rest of the page is devoted to a description of the cave site which Stein has later checked and corrected. So, for example, he later corrects his count of 460 extant caves to 515. He used these descriptions later for the published account of his expedition, Serindia.

Although the Boxer Rebellion was long over, there was considerable unrest at Dunhuang during Stein's visit because of the high taxes. When he left to travel further east Stein planned to leave the packed boxes of manuscripts, paintings and artefacts at the Dunhuang magistrate's office (the Yamen) for safekeeping. It was fortunate that he changed his mind; the locals rioted shortly after Stein left and burned down the Yamen.

155 Stein's expedition notebook for March-August 1907

1907 Ink on paper H: 230 cm w: 345 cm (Open) The Bodleian Library, MSS Stein 199/82V-83R

will book bearing to to from Transled parking of with to MH. by ICM trad for her wall to trage Mit to good will show number 12.

DUNHUANG: OFFICIAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE



Cat. 213 Interior of Cave 45 at Dunhuang showing the main statue grouping.

Dunhuang: 'The Chief Town of the Frontier Region'

Dunhuang, a small town in present-day Gansu Province, western China, has a history of over two thousand years. Lying on the Dang River flowing north from the Qilian Mountains to its south and disappearing into the Gobi Desert, the original town (west of the present-day town) was established as a military garrison by the Chinese empire after its soldiers had defeated the Xiongnu who had previously occupied this area. This was 111 BC and the Chinese built a line of defensive walls with regular watchtowers extending east to west north of the town. The Chinese used the garrison as a staging post for their campaign in 104 BC to conquer lands further west, and they reached as far as the Ferghanan valley between Kashgar and Samarkand in 100 BC.

With the Xiongnu driven out and the safety of the Tarim Basin to the west of Dunhuang secured by the Chinese garrisons, trade burgeoned and Dunhuang grew into a major town as it lay on the junction where the main trade route split into northern and southern branches around the Taklamakan desert. By AD 88 it was established as a Prefecture of China, but the disintegration of China at the end of the Han dynasty in 220 led to a new period of uncertainty and changing rulers. By 336 it was part of the Former Liang, one of the several dynasties that ruled northern China between the fourth and sixth centuries. Sometime before the end of the fourth century a large number of families from Southern China were relocated to Dunhuang and the pilgrim monk Faxian described Dunhuang as the chief town on the

frontier region when he passed through on his way to India in 400.

By this time an itinerant monk named Yuezun had excavated a meditation cave for himself in a cliff face some eight miles south-east of the town after having a vision of golden radiance in the form of a thousand Buddhas. Others followed and by the early fifth century the first cave temples were excavated, painted statues of Buddha and his attendant placed inside and their walls and ceilings painted with thousands of Buddha images: hence the site's common name: 'Caves of a Thousand Buddhas' or Qianfodong.

The area continued under the control of the various rulers of northern China and then under the Sui and Tang dynasties when China was reunited in the late seventh century. Eighty new caves were built in the Sui period alone and another hundred in the first half of the Tang. In 755 a rebel general took China's capital, forcing the emperor to flee. The troops in Dunhuang and the other Central Asia garrisons were hastily recalled and the Tibetan empire took advantage. Its troops conquered Dunhuang by 781 and remained in control until 848 when a Chinese loyalist general retook Dunhuang. But by this time China was weak and no longer in full control of outlying regions. Dunhuang soon turned into a semi-autonomous region with the ruler passing among members of the Zhang family and then, after 920, among the Cao family. They had close relations with their Khotanese neighbours to the east and the Turkic Uighurs to the north and east.

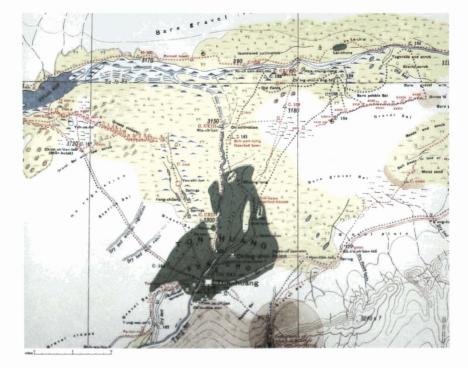


Fig. 30 Map of Dunhuang, the old city, the fortifications to the north and the Thousand Buddha Caves (Ch'ien-fo-tung or Qianfodong) to the south east in the early twentieth century as surveyed by Stein and his surveyors, Ram Singh and Lal Singh, during the first three Silk Road expeditions between 1900 and 1915.

Chinese Turkestan and Kansu, Serial No. 32, 1:500,000, Survey of India 1918 (for key see p. 134) The next few centuries saw the town fall under control of the empires of the region. First the Tanguts who arrived in 1038 and then the Mongol empire of Genghis Khan in 1227. Activity on the caves continued, each ruling power painting the caves according to their own style and beliefs. The Tanguts or Western Xia and Mongols were followers of tantric Buddhism and, as well as building new caves, they remodelled and painted over the decorations of existing caves. The last confirmed artistic activity at the cave site was in 1357 when Cave 3 was painted. When the Chinese defeated the Mongols and founded the Ming dynasty in 1368 they did not try to retain control of this region and officially withdrew their troops to east of Jiayuguan, itself east of Dunhuang. The area was retaken by the Tibetans in the early sixteenth century and then the Chinese under the Manchu Qing dynasty two centuries later. The present day city was built east of the ruined site of the old city in 1725.

In the first millennium the region was primarily occupied by Chinese and Tibetan soldiers and settlers, along with merchants, monks and others passing along the Silk Road. The languages of its manuscripts and inscriptions and the artistic styles of its paintings reflect this diversity.

Interest in the caves started in the early eighteenth century when local Chinese officials visited. A century later the Chinese historical geographer Xu Song recorded inscriptions from the caves and the Chinese official Xi Naigu wrote 'An Ode to the Thousand Buddha Caves' when posted there in 1831–4. In 1879 a Hungarian expedition arrived. One of its members, Count Loczy, later told Stein about the site.

In the 1890s an itinerant Daoist monk Wang Yuanlu settled at Dunhuang and decided to restore the largely abandoned caves. In 1900 while clearing sand out of Cave 16 the workmen realised that there was hollow space to the right of the corridor. They broke away the plaster and the hidden door to uncover a small cave crammed with manuscripts and paintings on silk. Examples were sent via the local officials to the Provincial Educational Commissioner and in 1902 he suggested that the store be moved to Lanzhou, the provincial capital. However, no funds were forthcoming for the transport and so they remained in situ for another five years. Then in 1907 Aurel Stein arrived, having heard of

'Over the rest of the walls there were paintings of such character that all the painters of the world would be struck with wonder.'

Zubdat al-tavarīkh by Ḥāfiz Ābrū 1422, (trans. in Maitra, A Persian Embassy, 39).

the site from Count Loczy but only hearing rumours of the Library Cave's discovery on his arrival.

Stein's first concern was with the Chinese Han period defensive walls and watchtowers north of the town. These had not been investigated before and he spent the winter surveying and excavating. He returned there on his third expedition in 1914 and altogether discovered scores of woodslips dating from the first century BC (cat. 136), many discarded items of everyday use including animal traps (cat. 81), fragments of silk (cat. 248), shoes and more. One of his most interesting finds was



Fig. 31 Stein's photograph of Cave 16 at the Mogao Caves near Dunhuang showing the entrance to the recently discovered Cave 17 on the right. The piles of scrolls and tables were probably added to the negative of the empty cave after his original photograph showing this scene was double exposed.

Stein, Ruins of Desert Cathay, fig. 188.

a small group of folded letters, now referred to as the Sogdian Ancient Letters, probably dating from the fourth century and telling of the life of Sogdian merchants and their families in the region (cats. 191–2).

Stein returned to the town and then to the caves where he met with the Guardian priest, Wang Yuanlu and, after some protracted negotiations, departed with boxes of scrolls and pothī. He was followed in 1908 by the French Sinologist, Paul Pelliot. The cave was then cleared by order of the Chinese authorities in Beijing and the remaining manuscripts taken to the Ministry of Education. However, Stein and both Japanese and Russian expeditions acquired more manuscripts from Wang Yuanlu in the following decade. It is yet to be ascertained whether Wang had secreted some away to fund his continued restoration, or had taken some from elsewhere to fill up the cave after it was cleared or, also a possibility, whether some of these manuscripts are forgeries. When Stein returned in 1914 Wang also gave him several plaques showing Buddhist monks (cats. 226, 229, 233).

Others visited the caves during the following decades and systematic excavation of the northern caves was carried out between 1988–1995 by the Dunhuang Academy. The site is now a popular tourist attraction, where visitors can see a selection of caves and also full-scale replicas prepared by artists at the Academy (cat. 213).

Official Duties (cats. 156-160)





156 Official Tang period (618-907) Bequest of Mrs B. Z. Seligman Glazed earthenware H: 66.7 cm W: 12 cm D: 8 cm Victoria and Albert Museum, FE.160-1974

157 Dignitary with beard Late 6th to early 7th century Gift of John Sparks Glazed earthenware and unfired pigments H: 72.5 cm W: 13.5 cm p: 0 cm Victoria and Albert Museum, C.222-1934

158 Census for 416

Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 24.6 cm W: 90.9 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.113

Giles, "A Census", 16; Giles, "Dated I", 811; Giles, Catalogue, no. 7871; TTD II, 1-3; Tang and Lu, Shehui I, 109-11; Yingzang, 1: 50-1; Wang and Li, Wei Iin, 115-8; Hao, Yingzang I, 183-9

Because of their position on a major trade route, Silk Road towns saw a regular traffic of people passing through, many demanding attention from the local officials. Regular embassies seeking trade, peace, war and marriage alliances required hospitality and officials, such as the one depicted in cat. 156, would have spent considerable time entertaining guests from near and afar, such as the dignitary shown in cat. 157. Both cats. 156 and 157 were made using moulds and lead glazed using the iron amber and brown and copper green common in China from the late sixth century. The wide-sleeved belted over-robe worn by the figure in cat. 156 is typical Chinese dress of the time. His hat is interesting as it has a depiction of a small bird, an indication of his role. The other figure sports a spectacularly well groomed beard, a large pot-belly and a helmet-like hat. The Chinese potters who modelled these figures clearly intended to show non-Chinese, and their dress, hat and features probably specified a particular foreign group.

Rong Xinjiang's essay (pp. 57-62) here discusses the role of the official in Dunhuang and the manuscripts show three of his major responsibilities as discussed by Rong.

Census records were essential for levying taxes, resolving land disputes and raising men for state labour and military service. Cat. 158 is a census dated to the first month of 416 for the village of Gaochang in the canton of Xidang, Dunhuang district. It lists ten households, nine of which are complete. These consist of 36 people in total making an average of four per household (the average for the whole of China in the census of 464 was over five). The entries give the head of the household



159 Boundaries of farm land

995 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 31.6 cm w: 45.7 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.4172

Giles, "Dated VI", 173; Giles, Catalogue, no. 7555; Ikeda, Shikigou, 667–8, no. 2349; TTD II A: 112, B: 160; Ogawa, "Tonkö bujitsu", 501; Yang, Tang mo Song chu, 13–4; Yingzang 4; 261; Tang and Lu, Dunhuang shehui II, 483–5; Rong, Guiyijunshi, 56



160 Almanac by Zhai Fengda

c.956
Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang,
Cave 17
Ink on paper
H: 30.1 cm w: 232 cm
The British Library,
Or.8210/S.95

Giles, "Dated VI", 154-5; Xiang, "Ji Dunhuang", 438; Giles, Catalogue, no. 7042; Fujieda, Rekijitsuu, 422-3; Yingzang, 1: 45-7; Deng, Tianwen Iifa, 469-505, 729; Teiser, Ten Kings, 120-1; Rong, Gujvijunshi, 27; Hao, Yingzang 1, 142-72





and his occupation, his wife (with her own surname) and the other household members. A typical entry reads:

Sui Song, Head Local Official, aged 50 His wife, Cao, aged 50 Their son, Shou, aged 24 Shou's wife, Zhao, 25 [Sui Song's] elder sister, Huang, aged 74. Added to the register. Adult males, 2 Females, 3 Total no. 5 Residence: Zhao Yu's Rampart Registered in the 1st month of the 12th year of Jianqu

This is one of the earliest manuscripts found in Cave 17 at Dunhuang and the handwriting is in the style of the fifth century. Cat. 159 is one of the latest manuscripts found in the cave. Dated to February 3, 995, it is a record of the borders of land held by six different owners and is clear enough to reconstruct a fairly accurate map of the holdings. As Giles notes, they run from north to south along a main canal on the east with uncultivated land and salt pools to the west. To the south are public lands. The lands are measured in *mou*, a Chinese unit calculated to be about 6.5 to the acre.

Cat. 160 is the calendar discussed by Rong in his essay here, calculated by Zhai Fengda, a high official in Dunhuang, copied by his son and presented to Cao Yuanzhong, the King of Dunhuang. The Chinese calendar was calculated according the lunar cycle, and this is complete with 354 days (occasional intercalary months were added to make the calendars tally with the solar year). The

images here show the start of the manuscript, the colophon which records Zhai Fengda and his son's involvement.

Although Cave 17 at Dunhuang was primarily a Buddhist library, a significant proportion of the texts found there were secular. There would have been an archive attached to the administrative offices in Dunhuang that kept copies of land records, censuses, calendars and other official documents. When the Tibetans took Dunhuang in the eighth century paper from China was in short supply. Documents were therefore reused, so we find secular scrolls with a Buddhist text on the back such as cat. 158 here: the Buddhist text is clearly later. In addition, paper was important for making patches to repair much worn manuscripts and these secular documents were probably also kept in the Library Cave for this purpose.

Astronomy and Astrology Along the Silk Road (cats. 161–165)



161 Star chart

xingtu", 367-72

Early 8th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 24.4 cm W: 330 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.3326 (Ch.85.XIII) Giles, Catalogue, no. 5658; Needham, Science and Civilisation III: 20, 264, figs. 99, 100, (pl. 24, 25); Xi, "Dunhuang xingtu", 27-38;

Li, Kexue, 211-13; Ma, "Dunhuang xian bowuguan", 477-89; Ma, "Dunhuang

162 Tejaprabhā Buddha and the **Five Planets**

897 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and colours on silk H: 80.4 cm W: 55.4 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.31 (Ch.liv.007) Stein, Serindia, 1060, pl. 71; Matsumoto, Tonkoga, 338-40; Waley, Paintings, no. 31;

Whitfield, Art, 1: 27





While the landscape of the Silk Road changed dramatically, the stars in the sky were the same for travellers on the shores of the Mediterranean and in Dunhuang. The main trade routes lie mainly between 30° and 40° latitude in the northern hemisphere and thus knowledge and myths associated with the heavenly bodies were largely portable from one culture to another. So Babylonian ideas had probably been integrated into Chinese knowledge by the sixth century BC, and Greek ideas merged with Indian ones, both also moving on to China. Knowledge of the stars continued to move along the Silk Road, especially from the Arabs towards the end of the first millennium AD. 1

Court astronomers of ancient China were just as concerned with astrology as with astronomy; the two were not distinguished at the time. This did not mean that astronomical knowledge was not accurate, as Bonet-Bidaud and Praderie show here in their discussion of cat. 161, a manuscript star chart from Dunhuang, where 1,345 stars are portrayed accurately grouped into asterisms (pp. 81-90). This chart was probably a reference work; Bonnet-Bidaud and Praderie suggest it may have been for military and travellers' needs. They also point out however, that the start of the manuscript contains diagrams of clouds formed into certain shapes with text below them explaining their predictive power and suggest that the charts may also have been used for uranomancy.

By the sixth and seventh century in China the stars were integrated into a complex group of beliefs that ranged from lucky and unlucky days (cat. 160), *fengshui* (cat. 264), the power of talismans (cat. 163), and the predicative power of heavenly signs, to the zodiacal animals (cats. 164, 165 and 264).

Privately produced almanacs of the time included all these elements and were enormously popular, despite the fact that the making of calendars was strictly reserved for the imperial astronomers. The Tang law code forbade the possession by private households of 'All implements and objects pertaining to occult counterparts; charts and texts about the Sky Patterns; oracular texts and military texts, 'Seven Planetoid Almanacs'; diagrams of the 'Grand Unity' and the 'Thunder Lord.'2 Despite this there is evidence that private almanacs continued to be produced. Indeed, the Dunhuang cave contained a fragment of an almanac printed by a family firm in Chang'an, under the very noses of the censors (see cat, 265).

As the reference to the 'Seven Planetoid Almanacs' suggests, the planets were part of Chinese astronomical knowledge and astrological beliefs. The five planets visible to the naked eye were known to Chinese astronomers and were each associated with one of the five elements of Chinese tradition (water, metal, fire, wood, earth). Each also took a specific anthropoid form when it revealed itself in the human world. The Indian Buddhist pantheon included seven planetary divinities (including the sun and the moon) corresponding to the seven-day week and, in addition, the two dragons of the eclipses, Ketu and Rāhu (see cat. 278), making the 'Nine Luminaries' (Navagraha). Each was associated with a region of the sky and a bodhisattva. These traditions are seen in Buddhist paintings along the Silk Road.

Cat, 162 shown here is described in the donor's inscription as Tejaprabhā Buddha and the Five Planets, a rare image. The five figures are identified (from the back and counter clockwise) as Mercury (the woman in black), Jupiter (the blue-clad magistrate), Saturn (with the cow), Venus (the lady in white playing a pipa) and Mars (the demonic figure).3 Jupiter was named the 'Year Star' (suixing) in Chinese and his actions were seen as closely allied to that of the emperor. In 756, for example, when Jupiter was in Gemini and the sun was in eclipse the Astronomer Royal predicted that 'the country shall perish': a clear reference to the rebellion that was sweeping China at that time.

Cat. 163 is a much cruder painting but shows how astronomical beliefs and Buddhism

combined with talismans – more traditionally part of the Daoist tradition in China. The two figures are labelled as Jupiter and Ketu (although Whitfield suggests that Jupiter is mislabelled and the woman with the writing brush and book (in codex form) is Mercury). The donor dedicates the painting to Ketu and 'the star that is genius of the northern quarter' and the inscription below reads:

'Whosoever wears in his girdle this talisman, which is a dhāraṇī talisman, will obtain magic power and will have his sins remitted during a thousand kalpas. And of the Ten Quarters all the Buddhas shall appear before his eyes. Abroad in the world he shall everywhere encounter good fortune and profit. Throughout his life he shall enjoy other men's respect and esteem. His religious merit shall be unparalleled, and this protection and purification shall come to him as swiftly as Lu Ling rides.' 4

The planets in cat. 162 all have animals in their headgear and this is seen again in cat. 164, a detail from an incomplete almanac for 978 showing the Year Star - Jupiter - in the centre surrounded by figures of the twelve 'Great Spirits' - the animals that formed the Chinese animal cycle - and the four Guardian Kings. Each year was associated with one of the twelve animals (rat, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, serpent, horse, goat/sheep, monkey, cock, dog, boar/pig) and five elements so forming a sixtyyear cycle. The animal cycle was not a traditional Chinese belief but travelled along the Silk Road and had taken root in China by the Tang period. The monkey, an animal which features prominently in pre- and post-Buddhist Indian myths, became popular in China and particularly associated with the Silk Road following his inclusion in the fictionalised tale of Xuanzang's journey to India. The same animal cycle was well established in Central Asia. It was used in Khotanese (see cat. 165), Sogdian, Buddhist Sanskrit, Tocharian, Gändhärī and Turkic accounts as well as Chinese.5

- 1 For a discussion of this see Schafer, Pacing the Void., 9-11.
- 2 Ibid. 12 for translation. See also Whitfield, "The Censor", for a discussion of this.
- 3 See Matsmoto, Tonkōga, 338-40.
- 4 Translation from Waley, Paintings, 165. Lu Ling is an attendant to the God of Lightning (see also cat. 278).
- 5 See the article "Calendars I" In Encyclopedia Iranica (4: 667) for a review.

163 Talisman of the pole-star

Mid 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and colour on paper H: 42.7 cm W: 30 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.170 (Ch.lvi.0033) Stein, Serindia, 1080; Waley, Paintings, no. 170;

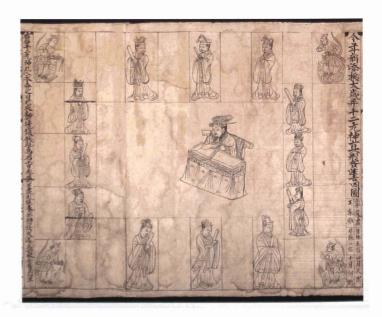
Whitfield, Art, 2: 61; Farrer and Whitfield,

Caves, no. 64

164 Almanac with year gods

978 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 30 cm w: 255 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.612

Giles, "Dated VI", 162; Giles, Catalogue, no. 7045; Fujieda, Tonkō lijipu, 426; Yingzang, 2: 72-5; Mao. "Jiu gong tu", 302-11; Deng. Tianwen lifa, 513-29; Deng, Wu Qiyu, 141-56; Hao, Yingrang III, 282-305





165 Animal zodiac - Khotanese

Early 9th century Acquired 1930, F. Williamson Ink on paper H: 155.6 cm W: 28.5 cm The British Library, Or.11252/1 Skjærvø, Khotanese, 82-85; Bailey, "Hyatanica [1]", 924-930

This document is one of a group of forty one presented by Williamson who was Consul-General in Kashgar from 1927 to 1930. The other forty, like cats. 116 and 117, formed part of an archive containing the correspondence and records of officials from the Six Villages. It is possible that this animal cycle also originates from the same source. It consists of four sheets of paper, originally stuck together.

The text on the verso is entitled: 'The twelve year leaders and (their) influences'. It lists the animals in the cycle with predictions for people born in that year. The animals are the same as those found in Sogdian, Sanskrit, Tocharian, Gāndhārī and Turkic accounts as well as Chinese and Tibetan, suggesting a common source:

First the Rat. A man is born in the Year of the Rat. He will be short-lived and ... and ... the harvests will not be good. And he will be a quarrelsome man. And [he will not be] blessed (with wealth). If they live, they will be short-lived. And he will have many rivers (to cross?). And armies many (?)...

A man who is born in the Year of the Ox becomes happy. And whatever sons he has here, they will all of them be happy. And whatever harvests he sows will be good for him. And he will have many draught animals. And he will be able to conduct purchases and sales well. And he will have fear of water and fire.

A man is born in the Year [of the Tiger]. He will be a merchant and litigious, and his harvests will not be good. And his speech will be disturbed and his life long.

A man is born in the Year of the Hare. He will be altogether happy. He will be altogether blessed with money, cattle, horses, and all [blessings?]. And he will not have to go far away. And on him there will be a lot of itching. And when he sows harvest it will not be good for him. And he will be evil in tongue. And he will be evil in mind. He will die of the grasp (of an evil planet).

In the Year of the Dragon there will be much rain. And gales will blow. And there will be much water. And many armies will travel (through). The lands (times?) will change, and they will conquer all. And fire will fall. [There will be] fear of fire. [If] a man is born, he will be long-lived.

A man is born in the Year of the Snake. He will have much water, and there will be much rain. And the harvests will not be good for him. And he will have much illness. (His) men will die. And [there will be] fear [of ...]. If a man is born, he will be long-lived.

A man is born in the Year of the Horse. And he will have to stay(?) far away. And if they steal(?) something here, he will not be able to do anything about it(?). And there will be many enemies for (among his?) the men. And they will send little ... There will be illness [for ...]. They will die.

A man is born in the Year of the Sheep. He will be blessed, meritorious. He will be blessed in everything, in crop and money. And he will be sickly and short-lived. There will be bad illnesses upon him. And a lot of itching will arise for him as well as a wound. If his wives [become] pregnant, they will die. And whatever sons they bear will be short-lived.

A man is born in the Year of the Monkey. He will have to stay(?) in a land far away. And he will have many sons. And he will be good with respect to gift(s)(?). He will have many servants and horses. And if they steal(?) something here he will [not?] be able to restrain (them). They will take all he has(?). And they will have no refuge from (their) sons, and they leave or die.

A man is born in the Year of the [Cock]. If he has sons, they will all of them be short-lived. And they will be blessed. Barley, wheat, money, they will be blessed with everything. And they will not be able to order any work upon him(?). (He will have) fear for fire. And locusts will come (and) eat his crop.

A man is born in the Year of the Dog. He will be short-lived and poor. And whatever sons are [born] to him, they will all of them be short-lived. And his tongue will not (... ?) and (his) speech (will be) confused. And ... And locusts will come (and) eat his crop.

A man who is born in the Year of the Pig will be short-lived. And all his sons will be short-lived and sickly. In the land all will be much illness. And armies will not(?) travel (through). And beings will be evil with respect to tongue. And locusts will come (and) eat his crop.

Officials at Play (cats. 166-173)

Falconry and hunting were pursuits of the steppe people living north of the Silk Road, but just as the military of the neighbouring civilizations adopted the steppe riding skills for warfare, their aristocracies soon also became keen horsemen. Chinese imperial tombs of the Tang period (618-907) contain wall paintings with the Chinese princes riding off to hunt and to battle: sometimes with their hunting dogs and cats on their horses' backs, or with falcons on their arms (fig. 33). The presence of figurines such as cats. 166 and 167 in the tombs reinforces the fact that the Chinese imperial family had adopted the pursuits of the neighbouring steppe peoples, among them hunting with dogs. The saluqi a coursing hound - is held by some to be the earliest domesticated dog. It is known from c.2100 BC in ancient Egypt where these revered dogs were sometimes found mummified in royal tombs; carvings dating from the Sumerian empire (7,000-6,000 BC) have also been identified as saluqi.1 It is also known in India from the time of Alexander the Great and in China from these depictions in eighthcentury tombs.

Falconry is another ancient sport, still popular in the steppe. The Kirghiz of the Heavenly Mountains north of the Taklamakan continue to hunt today, sometimes catching prey as large as wolves and foxes using eagles. There are again many depictions and descriptions of falconry among the Chinese Tang aristocracy, the detail from a Buddhist painting shown in fig. 32 being one example.

Officials also found less active ways to relax. Grapes have been grown since Neolithic times in the ancient Near East and Egypt, and remains of resinated wine have been found in jars dating from c.5400-5000 BC at the site of Hajii Firuz Tepe in the northern Zagros Mountains in present-day Iran. Herodotus mentions the shipping of wine down the Tigris and Euphrates from Armenia in the fifth century BC but the domesticated grape was almost certainly also grown locally in Mesopotamia by this time and moved eastwards to the whole of Central Asia; grape seeds were taken back to China by Zhang Qian, the envoy to Central Asia in the second century BC. By the time of the Tang there are references in Chinese sources to grapes and wine from Central Asia and a local winemaking industry using the mare's teats grapes from Gaochang (that China had conquered in 640). The exhibits here reflect this interest.

Cat. 168 is a small earthenware vessel with a stylized pattern of vines, probably used as a drinking vessel, with a lead glaze of copper green inside and iron amber on the outside, suggesting a late sixth- or seventhcentury date. Cats. 169 and 170 by contrast are of the highest quality and made in expensive materials of silver and gold: comparatively rare in China where jade was always more revered than precious metals. Silver and gold working was more a practice of China's Central Asian neighbours, both the northern steppe dwellers and the Persians and Sogdians. The material artefacts suggesting a drinking

culture are reinforced with textual evidence; many poems and stories of the period, for example, tell of drinking games and drinking songs, sometimes involving dice, such as the one shown here (cat. 171) found in Endere (the earliest examples of manufactured dice date back to the third millennium BC from northern Iraq and India).

Cat. 172 shows that wine was enjoyed socially - sometimes to excess. The manuscript is a copy of a series of 'model letters' produced by the Bureau of Etiquette in Dunhuang for the guidance of officials and others. Similar letters were popular in Victorian England, directed mainly at the large class of servants and giving examples of how to refuse an offer of marriage, accept a job and other situations requiring written communication. Many collections were found among the Dunhuang manuscripts, and sometimes included useful phrases on the weather with which to open a letter. Cat.172 has a note at end: 'Copied by Yin Xurong of Weian at the wei hour (1-3 pm) on the eleventh of the ninth month of the tenth year of Dazhong' [October 13 856]. It starts with pleasantries such as: 'seventh month, the first of autumn, and gradually getting cooler.' These are followed by various letters grouped according to titles inserted in red, such as 'Communications of a complimentary nature between fellow officials'. The letter shown here is in the section entitled 'Letters of greetings on various occasions' and is itself titled 'A letter of apology for getting drunk.' Giles translates it with his usual elegance:

'Yesterday, having drunk too much, I was so intoxicated as to pass all bounds; but none of the rude and coarse language I used was uttered in a conscious state. The next morning, after hearing others speak on the subject, I realized what had happened, whereupon I was overwhelmed with confusion and ready to sink into the earth with shame. It was due to a vessel of small capacity being filled for the nonce too full. I humbly trust that you in your wise benevolence will not condemn me for my transgression. Soon I will come to apologise in person, but meanwhile I beg to send this written communication for your kind inspection. Leaving much unsaid, I am yours respectfully.'3

But, as cat. 173 shows, there were alternatives to wine. Written by the Chinese provincial



Fig. 32 Detail of a painting from Dunhuang showing a hunter with his salugi and falcon.

The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.36



166 Hunter on horseback with dog

c.706 Excavated 1960: Princess Yongtai's tomb (d.706), Qianxian County, Shaanxi Province, China Earthenware with pigments H: 31 cm w: 21 cm Shaanxi Provincial History Museum, Xian, 244

167 Saluqi

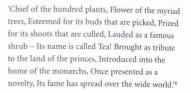
Tang (618-907) Bequest of Mrs B. Z. Seligman Unglazed earthenware H: 12 cm W: 4 cm D: 9 cm Victoria and Albert Museum, FE. 155-1974



Fig. 33 A wall painting from Prince Zhang Huai's tomb showing the prince and his comrades off on a hunting expedition, some with their hunting cats sitting behind them.

Courtesy Shaanxi Provincial History Museum.

graduate Wang Fu it takes the form of a debate between tea and wine.4 Whereas wine was local to Dunhuang, tea would have had to have been imported from China. Tea drinking originated in China; legends date its discovery back to the third millennium BC but the earliest historical evidence dates to the middle of the first millennium. A dictionary of AD 350 defines it as a 'beverage made from leaves by boiling' and it is probable that it only started to become popular around the seventh and eighth century,5 as the opening salvo in the debate suggests:



This is not quite true: it only reached Europe in the early seventeenth century. Buddhist monks were probably responsible around this time for taking the habit of tea drinking both to Japan and along the Silk Road to India, Sri Lanka and other regions that are now both major producers and imbibers. A story in the Chan or Zen tradition tells of how the Indian monk Dharma, founder of the tradition, went to China and, on falling asleep during his meditation, tore out his eyelids that then sprouted into the tea plant. The leaves of this helped to keep him awake. Buddhists continue to drink large quantities of strong green tea during meditation. But wine made stronger claims in the debate for its own efficacy:

'Give men wine with their meat, And never shall they have an evil thought. Where Wine is, there will also be Benevolence and Righteousness, Propriety and Wisdom. Clearly it deserves the highest honour, For what other beverage can compare with it?'

The debate ends when Water enters, pointing out that they both depend on him and so their debate is futile.



- Goodman, Saluqi. Thanks to Sir Terence Clark for first pointing out to me the importance of the saluqi.
- 2 Whether falconry originated in the Middle East or on the Central Asian steppes further east is still under discussion.
- 3 Giles, "Dated IV", 1026-7. In his Six Centuries he translates a letter of reply for such an occasion in another collection (Or.8210/S.5636) which reads: 'Yesterday Sir, while in your cups, you so far overstepped the observances of polite society as to forfeit the name of gentleman and made me wish to have nothing more to do with you. But since you now express your shame and regret for what has occurred, I would suggest that we meet again for a friendly talk.' (34)
- Another copy, which is complete, is to be found in
- Schafer, Golden Peaches, cites the Tangshu to show how the Uighurs were also fond of tea. The Classic of Tea (Chaiing) was written by a Chinese literatus in 760.
- 6 Translated by Giles, Six Centuries, 28.



168 Bowl with moulded relief of vine

Late 6th to 7th century Bequest of J. G. Maxwell Brownjohn: China Glazed earthenware н: 4.5 cm Diameter: 10 cm Victoria and Albert Museum, C.25-1946



169 Gold cup with chased design

Tang (618-907) Eumorfopoulos Collection, acquired with the aid of the NACF: China Chased gold н: 4 cm Diameter: 7 cm Victoria and Albert Museum, M.30-1935.



172 Model letters: 'A letter of apology for getting drunk'

Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 25 cm W: 250 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.2200

Giles, "Dated IV", 1026-7; Giles, Six Centuries; Giles, Catalogue, no. 7497; Yingzang, 4: 37-40; Zhao, Xieben shuyi, 518-67



イギンスアードと

170 Silver cup with chased designs

Kerr, Chinese Art, 172, pl. 78

Tang (618-907) Eumorfopoulos Collection, acquired with the aid of the NACF: China Chased silver H: 5.1 cm Diameter: 6.5 cm Victoria and Albert Museum, M.32-1935. Kerr, Chinese Art, 172, pl. 78



171 Bone die

8th to 9th century Stein, 1st expedition: Endere H: 1.3 cm W: 1.3 cm The British Museum, 1907,11-11.144 (E.001.b) Stein, Ancient Khotan, 442, pl. 52



173 Debate Between Tea and Wine

9th to 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper н: 30 ст w: 39 ст The British Library, Or.8210/S.406 Giles, Catalogue, no. 7257; Chen, Haitan,

271-88; Yingzang, 1: 185; Huang and Zhang, Bianwen, 423-33; Hao, Yingzang II, 292-6



174 Woman in hufu 8th to 9th century Eumorfopoulus Collection, acquired with the aid of the NACF Glazed earthenware H: 32 cm W: 10 cm D: 11 cm Victoria and Albert Museum, C.815-1936





175 Female polo player 8th century Northern China Terracotta with traces of slip H: 27 cm Private Collection

176 Female polo player 8th century Northern China Terracotta with traces of slip and pigments H: 30 cm Private Collection



177 Kneeling woman in travelling clothes

7th century Michael Calmann collection: Northern China Terracotta with traces of pigment H: 23.5 cm Musée Guimet, MA 3919 Destoches, Ages et Visages, 189; Destoches

Desroches, Ages et Visages, 189; Desroches and Peyrefitte, Visiteurs, 56–7; Desroches, Compagnons, 189–190

178 Avalokitesvara as guider of souls

Late 9th century
Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang,
Cave 17
Ink and colours on silk with
gold leaf
H: 80-5 cm w: 53.8 cm
The British Museum,
1919,0101,0.47 (Ch. lvii. 002)
Stein. Serindia. 867, 1081-2. pl. 71: Waley.
Paintings, no. 47: Fong. "Secular Painting",
179; Whitfield, Art. 29; Farrer and Whitfield.

Caves, no. 14





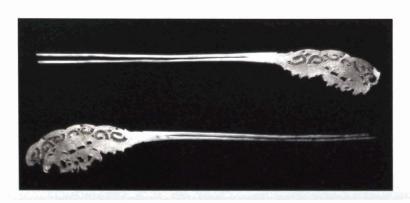
179 Chinese lady

8th century Excavated (date not recorded) from a tomb in Zhongbucun, Shaanxi Province Tricolour glazed earthenware H: 45 cm Shaanxi Provincial History Museum, 91.558(08584)



180 Chased Silver Box for Medicine or Cosmetics

Tang dynasty (618-907) China Chased silver н: 5 cm Diameter: 7.5 cm Victoria and Albert Museum, M.125-1938 Kerr, Chinese Art, 140, pl. 59



181a & b Silver hairpins

Tang dynasty (618-907) Eumorfopoulos Collections, acquired with the aid of the NACF: China Silver and silver gilt L: a) 31 cm; b) 30.5 w: 7 cm Victoria and Albert Museum, M.64-1935

Art, 3, Fig. 122

6th to 7th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Gaochang Silk, leather L: 23 cm The British Museum, 1928,1022.196 (Kao.III.03) Stein, Innermost Asia, 601, pl. 88; Whitfield,



183 Embroidered Shoe

Caves, no. 143

6th to 7th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Gaochang Silk embroidery L: 22 cm The British Museum, 1928,1022.197 (Kao.III.063) Stein, Innermost Asia, 594, 604, pl. 88; Whitfield, Art. 385, Farrer and Whitfield,



It was not only the men of the Chinese aristocracy who took to horse-riding; by the Tang dynasty (618-907) Chinese women are often depicted on horseback. Like the men, they too adopted the dress of their horse-riding neighbours, the so-called 'foreigners' dress' (hufu), consisting of a belted knee-length tunic with splits up the side worn over loose trousers gathered at the ankle and tucked into high boots. Indeed, the hufu became the fashion in seventh and early eighth century Chang'an and there are many images of groups of women, some in the long traditional female Chinese robes - which were worn décolleté at this period – and others in hufu such as cat. 174. This piece has a cobalt blue lead glaze which is seen in China from the beginning of the eighth century. It arrived along the Silk Road from the Near East, probably in the form of glass cabachons. These only needed to be ground down and fritted with lead glazing material to make them ready for use. The amber of the lapels was from iron and the green of her shoes from copper, both used in the seventh century. She may be holding a small dog - although the modelling is indistinct. Pet dogs were fashionable among the Chang'an aristocracy. The most famous Chinese woman of the mid-eighth century, Yang Guifei, the emperor's favourite concubine, was known to have a small 'Samarkand' dog which she used to distract the emperor's opponents when they were playing cards so she could cheat on his behalf.

The invention of stirrups, probably sometime in the middle of the first millennium AD, made riding a lot easier and, as seen from the two polo playing women here (cats.

175-6). The style of saddle with its high front and back also assisted riders in keeping their seat while grappling with a polo stick. The second woman rides a dappled horse from the Heavenly Mountains. This breed is seen throughout the Silk Road and is thought by some to be the Heavenly Horses which China prized so highly (see cats. 59-60). This figure also wears an interesting high hat, perhaps a special riding hat; although most polo players are seen bare headed with their hair in either a single (cat. 175) or double bun. The head covering by the kneeling figure in cat. 177 is identifiable as a weimao 帷帽, a sort of semirigid balaclava said to have been worn by Tocharian women (from the northern Silk Road) in bad weather, sometime with a hat on top.1 It was probably ideally designed for riding in dust storms as, like the turban seen throughout the Middle East, it protected most of the face against the stinging sand. This hat and the riding clothes suggest the figure is resting after a long journey.

All these women are slender but Yang Guifei was renowned for her plump beauty, the fashion by her time, or perhaps she set the fashion. Depictions of Chinese women reflected the changing preference from the thinner women to the more Rubenesque female figure as shown in cats. 178 and 179.

In cat. 178 the donor is depicted being led to paradise by a bodhisattva, most probably Avalokiteśvara: a common motif of paintings of this time (cat. 298). Both figures are on clouds and paradise can be seen in the top left. She is sumptuously dressed, made up and has an elaborate hairstyle with several hairpins and a comb, possibly in the form of a white

bird. Cosmetics were widely used by Chinese and Silk Road women. The face was powdered, the lips rouged and distinctly shaped eyebrows drawn on the forehead; these were referred to by Tang poets as 'moth' eyebrows. Cat. 180 is a very finely worked small chased silver box, possibly used as a cosmetic box by a rich Chinese woman. Hair ornaments were made from gold and silver and from the many semi-precious stones supplied along the Silk Road. The two shown here (cat. 181) depict paired phoenixes holding a ribbon. They are not dated but, even if later than the period under discussion, are representative of the types of hairpin worn as seen in cat. 178. A ninth-century Arab visitor to the Chinese capital noted, 'the women go about with head uncovered and put combs in their hair.'2 These hairpins are relatively simple compared to the elaborate jade headdress worn by the Khotanese princess depicted on the walls of Dunhuang (fig. 8).

The woman depicted in cat. 179 is wearing embroidered shoes with rolled up toes that protrude below her gown, similar to those shown in cat. 288. The two shoes here (cats. 182 and 183) were found by Stein at the ancient city of Gaochang (Karakhoja or Kocho), near Turfan, and Stein suggests from the context where found that they date to the Uighur period, that is before the Chinese took the city in 640. The delicate and colourful embroidery has largely survived and the soles were reinforced with leather.

¹ See Shen, Gudai Fushi, 194-6.

² Sauvaget, Relation, 11.

Women's Matters (cats. 184-86)

184 Avalokiteśvara as a succourer in trouble

892 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and colours on silk H: 83.3 cm w: 63.1 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.28* (Ch. xx. 005) Stein, Serindia, 1018; Waley, Paintings, no. 28*; Whitfield, Art, 1:26, Figs. 74-77, 3: pl. 16

185 Woman giving birth

9th to 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper 42 folios; н: 10 cm w: 9 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.6983 ff.9v-10R Fujieda, Tonkō, 2-44; Whitfield, Art, 2, fig. 92; Jao, Peintures, 47





186 Prayer for dysmenorrhoea

9th to 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper 10 folios; н: 14.7 cm w: 15 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.5561 fgv Giles, Catalogue, no. 6280; Yingzang, 8: 22-27



Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva of compassion, is ubiquitous among the Dunhuang wall paintings, portable paintings and manuscripts in both Chinese and Tibetan (see cats. 123–8, 193, 194, 238, 239), attesting to the bodhisattva's growing popularity from the ninth century onwards. Cat. 184 is what Whitfield describes as a 'modest painting', dedicated in 892 by the monk Zhigang, the nun Zhengming and others 'on behalf of deceased nuns, clerics, and ācāryas' (Waley, Paintings, 47). Zhigang is pictured to the left of the cartouche, with Miaochen and Hezi seated behind him. On the right are Shengming, Puzheng and Minglu.

The range of donors recorded in the paintings and prayers to Avalokitesvara reveal his popularity across the population, from clerics, as here, to rulers and children (cats. 194, 238). His many forms - more than any other bodhisattva - included the female Tārā in the Tibetan and other tantric traditions (cat. 243) and in later Chinese and Japanese tradition he also often assumes a female form in his role as a 'bestower of children'. In cat. 185 he is shown, in his male form, in this role. The text below is Chapter 25 of the Lotus Sutra, the Avalokites varas ūtra. By this time it was commonly copied as a separate text, often in small booklets which were starting to provide an alternative to the scroll (see cats. 257-60). The right-hand picture shows the couple praying to Avalokiteśvara and the left-hand one shows that their prayers have been answered: the woman is giving birth with a midwife and bowl of water at hand. The baby appears below her voluminous gown. The extract from the sutra below the left hand page (continuing on to the next page) reads:

'If a woman wishes to give birth to a boy, she should offer obeisance and alms to Avalokiteśvara and she will bear a son blessed with merit, virtue and wisdom. And if she wishes to bear a daughter, she will bear one with all the masks of comeliness, one who in the past planted the roots of virtue and is loved and respected by many persons.'

(Watson, Lotus Sutra, 300)

Cat. 186 is a series of prayers in a small booklet of the ninth or tenth century and contains ones for 'Difficult monthlies': the same term used in Chinese and over the world for the female menstrual cycle. Apart from Buddhist prayers, there were various other remedies for such ailments, including the burning of charms to herbal medicine.



187 Sayings of the Sumpa women

9th or 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 24 cm w: 101 cm The British Library, IOL Tib J 730 Thomas, Ancient Folk Literature, 103–12 The Sumpa were a Central Asian peoples some of whom were governed by a female monarchy. This was a matriarchal society in which the sons took the name of their mother, and the men's role was fighting and working on the land. The Sumpa (see pp. 42 n.11, 53) were closely allied with the Chinese, but in the eighth century they were conquered by the Tibetan army and were thereafter led by a male ruler.

This scroll contains seventy-six sayings attributed to the women of Sumpa, most probably translated or transmitted after the conquest by a Tibetan wishing to preserve the wisdom of the Sumpa people. The sayings are eminently practical; they concern family, business and government. The following are a few examples:

- 'A wise mother with a wise son is like turquoise set in gold.'
- 'A bad mother with a bad son is like an old hut full of manure,'
- 'One who is honest in trade will be prosperous in wealth.'
- 'The courage of a hero is in being unafraid of death.'

The imagery used in these sayings suggests a mountain dwelling people; they speak of snowy mountains and rocky valleys, the hunter's snare and the falcon's claw. The text displayed here is a later copy, written in Dunhuang on the back of a scroll containing a Chinese sutra, showing how paper was reused.

Women's Worries (cats. 188-90)



188 'Lament of the Lady of Qin'

10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper 9 folios; н: 15 cm w: 10.7 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.5477

Giles, "Lady of Qin"; Luo, Dunhuang lingshi; Giles, Catalogue, no. 7167; Yingzang, 7: 177-82; Xu, Shiji, 230-52



189 Women's club

959 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 30.2 cm w: 62.2 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.527

Giles, Catalogue, no. 7572; Giles, "Dated VI", 156; TTD, 4A: 9-10, B: 10; Tang and Lu, Shehui Jingji 1, 274-5; Yingzang, 2: 5; Gao, Minsu, 11; Dohi, Tō Hokusō, 713; Ning and Hao, Sheyi, 23–7; Hao, Yingzang I, 382; Xu, Shiji, 177–200; Hao, Yingzang III, 24–7



190 The shrewish young wife

10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 29.3 cm W: 82.5 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.4129

Giles, Catalogue, no. 7207; Demiéville "La nouvelle mariée acariâtre"; Chen, Haitan, 1: 42-5; Yingzang, 4: 258; Zheng, Wenxian, 277-302; Seo, Tôdai Chôan, 220-6; Zheng and Zhu, Mengshu, 409-21

The written histories of this period and region, primarily Chinese, say little about the role or experiences of ordinary people in society. Women are hardly mentioned unless they are an imperial princess being dispatched to marry a foreign ruler for the sake of peace. Popular literature tells us more, especially the short stories that became popular in China during the Tang, and the poetry by both men and women. The manuscripts from Dunhuang, however, add to the picture considerably in revealing a glimpse of lives and experiences we might not otherwise have expected.

Chinese histories included lists of the books of the period and from these and other contemporary bibliographies it is possible to estimate how many works have been lost. In this early period this was not generally through censorship (although this was a factor: see cat. 265) but rather through the inevitable ravages caused by time on only a handful of manuscript copies. Before the discovery of the Dunhuang cave historians knew that Wei Zhuang (d. 910), a Chinese poet and official, had written a narrative poem describing the sacking by rebels of the Chinese capital, Chang'an, in 881. But no copies of the poem were known and it was assumed it was lost for ever. However, when Lionel Giles was cataloguing the manuscripts from Dunhuang he discovered three fragmentary manuscripts which he recognized as copies of this poem. He also then heard of two copies in the Pelliot collection at the Bibliothèque nationale de France. One was dated to 906 - the final year of the Chinese Tang dynasty which had previously regained control from the rebels but had been fatally weakened. From these Giles was thus able to reconstruct and translate the poem, 'The Lament of the Lady of Qin'.

As the title suggests, the poem was written in the voice of a woman living in Chang'an at the time the rebels arrived on 10 January 881. The emperor fled and there was little resistance. In May the rebels were driven out but regained the city again shortly after and remained in control until 883. The start of the poem describes the poet's meeting with the Lady of Qin:

'O, Lady, whence do you come? Looking distressed, she was about to speak when a sob choked her utterance.

... Tossed and engulfed in the waves of revolution, how can I find the words to speak? Three years back I fell into the hands of the rebels

and was detained in the land of Qin."

She continues, talking about the initial entry of rebels into the city and how these events were reflected in the heavens, and then continues to describe the carnage:

Every home now runs with bubbling fountains of blood,

Every place rings with a victim's shrieks that cause the very earth to quake.

Dancers and singing girls must all endure secret outrage;

Infants and young girls are torn from their parents' arms.'

The account continues with examples of what happened to all the neighbouring girls, before the narrator explains how she had to follow with the army and live with them for three years until 'in her declining years' she is left alone 'in her wretchedness'.

For people not caught up in major events such as this, their concerns were more mundane. Among the Dunhuang manuscripts are many copies of club circulars sent to members informing them of the date and place of the next meeting. The members' names are listed at the end and, after making a mark next to their name to show they have seen the document, each member would pass it on to the next on the list. Most give the penalties for absence or late arrival: usually a fine of grain or wine. Most also seem to have a close relationship with the local Buddhist monastery. It was often the venue and the business of the meeting might include a sutra reading by a priest. Some clubs have a specific purpose, for example members are asked to make regular contributions and, after their death, the club funds pay their funeral expenses (cat. 281).

Many of these clubs are for women, as in cat. 189. This document lays out the rules and objectives of the club, which probably consisted of nuns. It starts with praise for friendship,

'Our parents gave us life, but friends enhance its value; they sustain us in time of danger, rescue us from calamity.'2

but soon moves on to list the contributions that members are expected to give on feast days: oil, flour and wine, presumably for the monastery and the acquisition of merit. But the members also participate in the feasts so that 'if there is anyone who ... in unruly fashion creates disturbances at a feast ... then all members shall repair to the gateway and fine her enough wine-syrup for a whole feast.' The penalty for anyone wishing to leave is worse: 'three strokes with the bamboo.' The names of the four office bearers and another eleven members follows with a note that the members are to swear by the hills and streams with the sun and moon as witnesses.

Many women probably entered the monastery because their families could not support them. Others, including imperial princesses, seemed to have chosen the life to avoid an unwelcome marriage. The woman described in cat, 190 did not have this choice. It is a satirical poem describing the experiences of a young wife who soon falls out with her husband's parents and gets a reputation as a difficult or shrewish woman. She rails against being treated like a servant and finally asks for a divorce. Divorce was possible through mutual incompatability or if the wife did not get along with her parents-in-law (in Chinese tradition, the wife left her parental home to live with her husband's family). Marriage was meant to be 'mutual affection like between a fish and water' but in this case 'how can a cat and mouse live for long in the same home?

In this poem the wife settles in a village and, ignoring convention, happily works in the fields to support herself. She ends with a message to her mother-in-law: 'it is in my nature to be wayward. If you had wanted me to perform the proper duties of a wife, then you needed to peel away many layers of my skin.' The poet then advises people to find out about future daughters-in-law and not to rely on the information given by matchmakers.

¹ Translation after Giles, "Lady of Qin".

² Translation by Giles, "Dated VI", 156.

³ See Demiéville, "La nouvelle mariée acariâtre".

A Fourth-century Abandoned Wife (cats. 191–92)





191 Sogdian letter no. 3

c.313-4 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang limes Ink on paper 11: 26 cm w: 42.7 cm The British Library, Or.8212/98 (T.XII.a.ii.3) Stein, Serindia, 776, pl. 153, 157; Reichelt, Die soohdischen Handschriftenreste, 21-5, pl. 3, 7

192 Sogdian letter no. 1

c.313-4 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang limes Ink on paper H: 25 cm W: 40.9 cm The British Library, Or.8212/92 (T.XII.a.ii.1) Stein, Serindia, 776, pl. 153, 140; Reichelt, Die soghdischen Handschriftenreste, 7-9, pl. 1 & 4

Cats, 191 and 192 are letters written by Mīwnāy, a woman who has been abandoned in Dunhuang by her husband Nanai-dhāt, to her mother Chatis and to her husband. They are two of a group of letters found in 1907 by Sir Aurel Stein in the ruins of a watch-tower in the limes north-west of Dunhuang. The contents of a postbag lost in transit from China to the west, the 'Ancient Letters' are so called because they are the earliest surviving texts written in Sogdian, a language of the Iranian family formerly spoken in Sogdiana. Written by Sogdian merchants on the Eastern Silk Road and addressed to their compatriots in Sogdiana or Kroraina, the letters provide a unique glimpse into the lives of the foreign merchants in China. They refer to Sogdians resident in the Chinese capital Luoyang and some of the major staging-posts on the route to China: Dunhuang (where the Sogdians may have had their own Zoroastrian temple), Jiuquan, Guzang and Jincheng. Most of the letters are concerned with commercial matters, naming many commodities including gold, silver, camphor, pepper, musk, wheat and various kinds of cloth. Nanai-vandak, the writer of another letter (Or.8212/95), goes beyond this to report in some detail on the deteriorating political situation in China. The momentous events described - a severe famine in Luoyang; the flight of the emperor; fighting between the Huns (Xiongnu) and the Chinese; and the sack of the cities of Ye (307) and Luoyang (311) - are also known from Chinese sources and make it possible to date the Letters to c. 313-4.

In Letter 3 (cat. 191) Mīwnāy complains to her husband that he has left her destitute and never even answers her letters; she explains how she has gone from one member of the Sogdian community in Dunhuang to another, trying without success to find someone to conduct her to her husband or her mother. The letter opens with conventional politenesses, but by the end Miwnay cannot

conceal her anger, 'I obeyed your command and came to Dunhuang and did not observe my mother's bidding nor that of my brothers. Surely the gods were angry with me on the day when I did your bidding! I would rather be a dog's or a pig's wife than yours!' In a milder postscript their daughter Shayn explains to her father that she and her mother have become servants of the Chinese, but she seems not to blame her father so much as a certain Farnkhund, perhaps a business associate of her father's, who has apparently absconded leaving Shayn and her mother to settle his debts.

In Letter 1 (cat. 192) Mīwnāy recounts some of the same events more briefly to her mother. The outside of the letter gives the names of the sender and addressee: 'From her daughter, the free-woman Miwnay, to her d[ear] mother [Chatis]'. The letter itself, opening with the same words, may be translated as follows:

[From her dau]ghter, the free-woman Mī[wnāy], to her dear [mother] Chatis, blessing and homage. It would be a good day for him who might (see) you healthy and at ease; and [for me] that day would be the best when we ourselves might see you in good health. - I am very anxious to see you, but have no luck. I petitioned the councillor Sagharak, but the councillor says: Here there is no other relative closer to Nanai-dhāt than Artivān. And I petitioned Artivan, but he says: Farnkhund ..., and I refuse to hurry, I refuse to ... And Farnkhund says: If your husband's relative does not consent that you should go back to your mother, how should I take you? Wait until ... comes; perhaps Nanai-dhāt will come. I live wretchedly, without clothing, without money; I ask for a loan, but no-one consents to give me one, so I depend on charity from the priest. He said to me: If you go, I will give you a camel, and a man should go with you, and on the way I will look after you well. May he do so for me until you send me a letter!

Children on the Silk Road (cats. 193-97)





193 Avalokiteśvara with donors

983 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and colours on silk H: 102 cm W: 75.5 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.54 (Ch.lvii.004) Stein, Serindia, 1082, pl. 66; Waley, Paintings, no. 54; Whitfield, Art, 2: 27, Fig. 36

194 Child's painting of Avalokiteśvara

Late 9th to early 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and colours on paper H: 46 cm W: 30.4 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.157* (Ch.00387) Stein, Serindia, 995-6; Waley, Paintings, no. 157*; Whitfield, Art, 2: 54; Farrer and Whitfield, Caves, no. 59

195 Multiplication tables

9th to 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper н: 30.1 cm w: 16.35 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.4569

Giles, Catalogue, no. 7763; Yingzang 6: 138







If little is known about women of the Silk Road, then even less is known about the lives of children. Dunhuang provides a few clues, not least the several paintings that show the families of the donors, sometimes including children, as in cat. 193. This is a late painting, dated to 983, when the donors were taking up almost as much space as the bodhisattva to whom the painting was offered; in this case, the ubiquitous Avalokiteśvara (although, as Whitfield points out, with a blurring of the iconographic features of Ksitigarbha). The two figures flanking the bodhisattva are the Good and Bad Boys, spirits who keep records of a person's behaviour, note it down in their scrolls, and then make reports to the Ten Kings when the individual is judged after his death (see cats. 296, 297).

The main donor is Mi Gongde, 'Prefect of Dunhuang,1 and is shown with his three sons in the upper row to the right of the cartouche. His wife and three daughters are to the left. Below right are his four grandsons, with his daughter, grand-daughter-in-law and granddaughters to the left. By this period it was common for women to wear elaborate headdresses almost hiding their hair and for the men to starch the ties of their official hats so that they stick out horizontally. The granddaughters wear copies of their mother's dress, but with a scarlet robe. They also wear make up and necklaces. The grandsons wear belted, knee-length robes over white trousers. Both sexes have a red and green headdress - possibly a ribbon - with short hair parted in the middle.

196 Concertina writing exercise

9th to 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 6.2 cm w: 6.5 cm The British Library, Or.8210/5.5491 (Ch.84.XII.14) Giles, Catalogue, no. 7985; Yingzang 7: 201-4

197 A primer of elementary knowledge

9th to 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper 6 folios; H: 14.5 cm w: 13.8 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.5755 Giles, Catalogue, no. 7279; Zhu, Dunhuang xieben, 120–38; Yingzang 9: 121–4; Zheng and Zhu, Menghu, 165–93

Cat. 194 is a rare surviving child's painting, again of Avalokitesvara, with a possible self-portrait on the middle left. All the usual accoutrements which appear in more sophisticated paintings have been added by this youthful artist but the cartouche is, unfortunately, blank so we do not know his name or the purpose of the painting.

Several manuscripts from the Library Cave consist of educational exercises, from multiplication tables (cat. 195), to writing practice (cat. 196) and textbooks such as cat. 197. Buddhist monasteries operated schools where students learned Confucian classics as well as Buddhist texts.

1 For full translation see Waley, Paintings, 88.

Music and Dance (cats. 198-203)



198 Paradise of Sākyamuni

Early 9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and colours on silk H: 168 cm W: 121.6 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.1 (Ch.xxxviii.004)

Stein, Serindia, 888, 1042–3, 1410, 1468; Waley, Paintings, no. 1; Whitfield, Art, 1:11, figs. 34, 35, 38, 72; Farrer and Whitfield, Caves, no. 2

Detail from cat. 198.





199a-g Seven horses with musicians

Excavated in 1995 from Li Hui's tomb (d. 689), Majiawan, Gaoling County, Shaanxi Province Tri-colour glazed earthenware H: 32-34 cm Shaanxi Provincial Archaeological Institute, 3, 9, 10, 12, 21, 26, 34

200a & b Two female musicians

Mid 7th century Michael Calmann collection Glazed terracotta H: 12 cm Musée Guimet, MA 4015 & MA 4016

Exhibited in Paris, 1937, nos. 338 & 339; Liu, "Kutscha", 99-107; Medley, T'ang Pottery, 16-56; Desroches and Rey, Chine, 148-9; Desroches, Compagnons, 157-9



201a & b Two female dancers

Tang (618-907) China Pale terracotta with traces of pigment н: 27.5 cm and 24.5 cm Musée Guimet, EO 2953 & MA 4697







202 Tables of musical notation

10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper 8 folios; н: 23 cm w: 16 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.5643

Giles, Catalogue, no. 7238; Yingzang, 2:247-9; Ji, Dunhuangxue, 263

203 Stringed musical instrument

c.3rd century Stein, 1st expedition: Niya Wood L: 43.5 cm The British Museum, 1907, 1111.90 (N.xii.2) Stein, Ancient Khotan, 399, pl. 73; Whitfield,

Music and dance were an everyday part of Silk Road life, whether it was the drummer who accompanied armies on the march, the travelling troupes of musicians and dancers, the chanting of Buddhist monks, or popular songs sung in the home. And, as with anything else, the traffic along the Silk Roads meant that traditions merged and were enriched by encounters with other traditions.

There are numerous material artefacts showing musicians and dancers. Many of the paintings from Dunhuang, both the wall paintings and the portable paintings on silk, include an orchestra and dancers, as shown in cat. 198 here, lute players (cat. 162) and apsaras with instruments. 3D models are also common, including the lute and pipe playing monkeys from Khotan (cat. 29b). One piece now in Shaanxi Provincial History Museum shows an orchestra atop a camel, and cat. 199 consists of an orchestra on horses. It includes both men and women, variously dressed in Chinese and Central Asian clothes and hats and playing drums and flutes. The artist has carefully painted the bridles and eyelashes of the horses in black ink over the glaze.

Cat. 200 shows two seated female musicians in the sixth- and seventh-century green and brown lead glaze. Their dress and hairstyle represent two traditions: the Kuchean and Chinese. The Kuchean musician plays a pipa (lute) an instrument originating in Iran which had reached China by the Silk Road and become popular by the fifth century. The Chinese musician plays a jiegu, a drum that originated in India and consisted of a skin stretched over a wooden frame. Kuchean music was famed along the Eastern Silk Road and many melodies were played using these two instruments.

In 640 Chinese troops took Gaochang, a city near present-day Turfan. The King was taken captive with many of his musicians. His arrival in Chang'an in 643 was the excuse for a three-day public holiday. Meanwhile a Chinese imperial decree of 642 institutionalized ten foreign troops of musicians in the imperial palace, including those from Kucha. The pipa became the subject of several poems by Tang literati over the following century and was fully incorporated into the Chinese musical repertoire. Just as the 'foreigners' dress' had become a fashion among the Tang aristocracy, so did a taste for 'western' music and dance.1

Yang Guifei, the mid-eighth century imperial concubine (see p. 243), took lessons in the Sogdian whirlwind or twirling dance with the general who later threatened

imperial power in China. Gossip apparently circulated in the capital about the impropriety of her actions. 'Western Twirling Girls' were sent as gifts from the rulers of Samarkand to those of China. This mixture is reflected in the scenes shown on the Sogdian Funerary Couch (cat. 1), which depict both Sogdian and Chinese dancers, and in numerous tomb figurines of the period showing dancers, such as cats. 201a-b.

Cat. 202 is one of the few extant contemporary documents with musical notation. The first part of the booklet contains the words of popular songs, including 'Farewell to the Soldiers' and some Buddhist texts. There follow notations for ten songs, including 'Songs of the South' and 'The Paired Phoenixes'. Many studies have been done to reproduce the music from this notation.

Remains of musical instruments from this period are also extremely rare. Cat. 203 is the neck of a lute discovered by Stein from third-century Kroraina, before the instrument became ubiquitous further east in China.

See Schafer, Golden Peaches, 50-7 for a discussion of this.

Buddhist Clergy in Dunhuang (cats. 204–10)





204 Report by Khotanese monk arriving at Dunhuang

9th to 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 30.8 cm W: 20.3 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.2528 Giles, Catalogue, no. 7514; Yingzang 4: 90-1; Zhang and Rong, Yutianshi, 118-9

205 Eleven-year-old becoming a nun

938 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 31.4 cm W: 46.5 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.4291

Giles, "Dated V", 336; Giles, Catalogue, no. 7384; Rong, "Juanzi", 654-5; Tang and Lu, Shehui 4, 65; Chikusa, Jiin monjo, 592-3; Rong, Guiyijunshi, 106, 108; Hao, Tanghouqi, 8-9

206 Buddha with begging bowl Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang,

9th century

Cave 17 Ink and colours on paper H: 21.7 cm W: 15.7 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.193 (Ch. 00413) Stein, Serindia, 998; Waley, Paintings, no. 193; Whitfield, Art, 2, fig. 124.





207 Supplies for a monastery

938 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 29.6 cm W: 62.4 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.1625 Giles, "Dated V", 337; Giles, Catalogue, no. 7643; Tang and Lu, Shehui 4, 398-9; Zongmu,

50; Yingzang 3: 112

208 Nun bartering black cow

Probably 803 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 27.3 cm W: 14.2 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.5820 Giles, Six Centuries, 36; Giles, Catalogue, no. 7523; Yingzang 9: 165; Sha, Qiyue, 55-6; Hao,

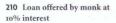
Tanghouqi, 90



209 Nun's will

865 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 27.7 cm W: 37.4 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.2199

Giles, "Dated IV", 1029-30; Giles, Catalogue, no. 7570; TTD 3:A 138–9, B: 73; Gernat, Buddhism, 81–2. Tang and Lu, Shehui 2, 153; Yingzang 4: 36; Hao, Tanghouqi, 84–5; Sha, Qiyue, 515-6



782 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 28.6 cm W: 39.2 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.5867

Stein, Giles, "Dated III", 21; Giles, Catalogue, no. 7529; TTD 3:A, 77, B, 38; Yingzang 11, 244; Zhang and Rong, Yutianshi, 85, Zhang and Rong, "Ba Shiji", 347





In its heyday there were at least seventeen Buddhist monasteries and nunneries in Dunhuang, with up to forty monks and sixty nuns in the largest, and about half the number again of resident novices. The addition of visiting monks and nuns, especially at times of festivals or in the summer made them bustling places where space was sometimes short; monasteries were obliged under monastic rules to provide free lodgings to travelling monks. Cat. 204 is a report from a Khotanese monk to announce his arrival in Dunhuang. An ephemeral document, it owes its survival to the fact that it was used to patch a torn sutra.

Although there was a proscription against joining the clergy below the age of twelve this was not strictly enforced. Cat. 205 is a letter from Cao Yijin, the ruler of Dunhuang, concerning the request of a local couple for their daughter, Shenglian, aged eleven, to become a novice. The Governor has granted permission, made his mark at the end and added three red seals (which are now very faint). A minimum age for novices was part of the Buddhist Vinaya - rules for clergy - but also enshrined in secular law, hence the need for Shenglian's parents to seek permission from the secular ruler of Dunhuang. The state sought to limit the number of monks and nuns; monastic lands were exempt from tax and the clergy from corvée duty.

Vinaya texts in Indian Buddhism discussed at some length the issue of property, both of the monastery and clergy, the samgha, dividing property into 'light goods' (lahubhanda) and 'heavy goods' (garubhanda). The former were items such as the indispensable baggage of a monk: clothing, a begging bowl, rosary beads and other small items. The bowl and monk's clothes were given to him after ordination and Buddha is often depicted as a monk with a begging bowl, as in cat. 206. In early Buddhism monks and nuns were expected to beg from the community for most of their needs. This tradition continued, but in Dunhuang in the eighth to tenth centuries, although the monasteries still received many supplies from the community as charity, they also were producers of goods for sale to the community.

The 'heavy goods' defined in the Vinaya were valuables and objects of a profane nature which were designated as 'impure'. In some Vinaya texts clergy were not only forbidden

to own such goods but also to have any contact with them. One Chinese text lists eight categories: gold and silver; male and female slaves; cattle and sheep; granaries; commercial; agriculture; and kitchens. However, there was a certain ambivalence in whether a monk was divested of his family property after ordination or simply separated from it, and as to whether heavy goods lost their impurity if owned by and exploited for the benefit of monastic community. And for impure goods to be used by the monastery they had to be purified; by this time, the 'purification' process involved commercial transactions.

Cat. 207 is one of the many administrative documents from Cave 17 giving an inventory of monastic goods. This particular document, dated December 938, lists various goods bought over 937 and 938, in total almost 162 shi (1 shi was equivalent to about 60 litres) of wheat, almost 106 shi of millet and about 14.5 shi of hemp. It was certified by five monks whose names are given at the end. Many monasteries had substantial agricultural lands on which cereals such as wheat and millet were grown. Although monks were proscribed by the Vinaya from coming into contact with agriculture it seems as if this did not deter monks at Dunhuang from labouring in the fields. In central China however, it was more usual practice for the monastery to use dependent households to carry out this work. Some larger monasteries also served as the millers for the community, the installations again handled by milling households. Hemp was used both as fodder for animals and, more importantly, for lamp and cooking oil and major monasteries also had oil presses used to produce their own and the community's oil. We can tell from the documents that hemp in Dunhuang was worth twice as much as cereals.

The goods in cat. 207 are monastic supplies, but cat. 208 concerns personal property of a nun. Preserved as a patch on another document, it is an agreement concerning the bartering of a three-year-old black cow 'completely unmarked' by the nun Mingxiang on account of her lack of food and outstanding debts. The new owner is Zhang Baoyu who agrees to give in exchange 12 shi of wheat and 2 shi of millet. This suggests that, while some of the larger monastic establishments were rich organizations this did not hold for all,

especially for the smaller, less influential nunneries.² The situation of individual clergy was also dependent on their family background. Although the land of those who 'left their families' to join the clergy was sometimes divided among the remaining family members, they often kept family property – including slaves – and this could be bequeathed on death (whereas other possessions would revert to the samgha). This is the case with the nun Linghui, who wrote her will while still in 'full consciousness' in November 865 after she had contracted a worsening disease.

'Linghui possesses only one slave, born in her family and named Weiniang, whom she bequeathes to her niece Panniang. She does not dispose of any other possessions in her cell.'

The will is witnessed by her niece, marked with her fingerprint; her three nephews, who all add signatures; the water official Suo; Governor-General of the Left, Chengzhen; and another nephew, Suo Jiji.

Linghui's behaviour was still just within the Vinaya but this was not the case with many of her fellow clergy who, as the documents from Dunhuang show, set themselves up as moneylenders for the community. In Gernet's words this 'is not a question of the degree of relaxation of the early austerity, but of a veritable rupture, a leap from the religious domain to the utterly profane and quasi-immoral domain of sales and loans at interest.'3 Cat. 210 is a typical document concerning repayment of a loan of one thousand cash to the novice Ma Lingzhuang, aged twenty, by the monk Qianying of the Huguo Monastery. The contract is dated to the twelfth of the seventh month of the third year of Qinzhong (782) and carries interest at ten percent per month. Principal and interest are repayable on demand and, failing this, Ma's property may be seized.

- 1 See Gernet, Buddhism, for a discussion of the reality of Buddhism in China and on the Silk Road as shown by the Dunhuang and other Eastern Silk Road documents. Translations here are also after Gernet. Kieschnick, The Eminent Monk, by contrast, discusses the ideals of monkhood at the time.
- 2 Gernet, Ibid. 187–91 for a comparison of the wealth of Dunhuang monasteries.
- 3 Gernet, Ibid. 162.

The Monk's Robe (cats, 211, 212)

211 Portrait of a monk

Late 9th to early 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 46 cm w: 30 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.163 (Ch. 00145) Stein, Serindia, 967, pl. 32; Waley, Paintings, no. 163; Whitfield, Art, 2:51

Stein collected cat. 212, a colourful composite textile, from Cave 17 along with the manuscripts and paintings. The Library Cave was originally a memorial to the priest Hongbian (d.868), who built Cave 16 in 851. It still preserves a ninth-century portrait sculpture of Hongbian, his body wrapped in a patchworklike ecclesiastical garment known as a kāṣāya (Ch: jiasha 架装; J: kesa), also worn by the drawing of a monk in cat. 211.

This unusual textile is formed from patched squares of woven and dved silks, backed with additional pieces of silk and bast fibre.1 A border of clamp-resist (Ch: jiaxie 夾纈; J: kyukechi) dyed tabby with a pattern of floral scrolls and confronted birds circumscribes a central rectangular panel, now containing fifteen different textiles. The silk patches - arranged symmetrically for the most part - include weft- and warp- faced compound twills, embroidered complex gauzes, damasks, double weave, and clamp-resist dved tabby. Many of the motifs are typical of Tang period textiles and include flowers and foliate scrolls, sometimes in variegated multicolored bands; composite floral medallions and quatrefoils; lozenges and geometric motifs; and birds and butterflies. Two of the corresponding patches are pieced from smaller squares of yellow, red, and purple damasks. A long band of coarse silk tabby with clamp-resist dved designs of floral medallions and quatrefoils extends along one of the long sides. In the centre, a large, square section is almost



entirely lost; existing fragments however, suggest the earlier presence of a decorative panel of red gauze embroidered with flowers, birds, and butterflies. (The blue and dark red damasks visible in this section today were likely part of the lining.) Similar embroidered red gauze patches along the edge have suffered the same fate; the only embroideries that remain relatively intact are two exquisite Tang-style floral compositions on white gauze.

The symmetrical, seven-column composition of this textile has led many scholars to identify it as a kāsāya, the outermost and most symbolic robe of a Buddhist monk's costume that in China took the form of a mantle to be worn over sleeved garments. Kāsāya were typically made of between five and twenty-five columns of symmetrically staggered rectangular patches delineated by intermediary bands and a surrounding border - a structure symbolizing, among other things, the poverty and humility of the priesthood.2 The arguments for this identification are cogent: documentary evidence and extant examples suggest that the seven-column kāsāya was the predominant construction of the day.3 Though they probably predate the Stein textile, all nine of the best-known extant Tang or eighth-century Japanese kāsāya are of the seven-column variety - seven in the North Section of the Shosō-in repository in Nara, Japan, and two preserved in the Kyoto temples of Tō-ji and Enryaku-ji, both designated as Japanese National Treasures. In addition, the

existence of purple damask squares in the Stein patchwork, when considered together with the discovery of purple silk scraps inside the sculpture of Hongbian in Cave 17, jibes with documentary evidence that Hongbian had been authorized by the Tang emperor to wear kāṣāya of the restricted colour4 providing plausible testimony that this was a 'purple robe' (Ch: ziyi 紫衣, J: shie) worn by the high priest himself.

A closer analysis of the material aspects of this piece, however, reveals convincing reasons that it may not be a kāsāya after all. Firstly, from a practical standpoint, its dimensions make it too small to wrap around the body in the manner typical of seven-column robes; the nine kāsāya mentioned above all measure between 116 cm-153 cm in height and 237 cm-297 cm in length. Second, the large square embroidered panel in the centre and the long horizontal strip on one side of the central panel are out of keeping with the standards of kāṣāya construction, seen in contemporaneous robes and visual sources including the aforementioned sculpture of Hongbian. Finally, the colours and patterns of this garment are out of keeping with prescriptions that Buddhist clerical garments be made from drab, sombre colours. (The Sanskrit word kāsāya original referred to the dull, 'non-proper colours' of the priesthood, in contrast with the five 'proper colours' of blue, red, yellow, white, and black, worn by Indian laypeople.) Though divergences from such regulations were common, especially in later periods, the colouration, patterns, and techniques found in the Stein textile - especially the multicolored clamp-resist dyed border would probably not have been considered appropriate for this most sacred of Buddhist garments.

For these reasons, Stein's original labelling of this piece as a 'votive patchwork' may not be entirely inaccurate. Specifically, it may have functioned as an altar or offeringtable covering (see fig. 20) or, alternatively, as a mat for Hongbian or other high priests to sit upon during Buddhist rituals (see cat. 211).5 Whatever its use, the condition, composition, and variety of textiles in this piece make it unique among the remaining objects of the Tang dynasty.

MMR







Detail of an embroidery panel from cat. 212.

8th to 9th century 212 Patchwork textile

Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang,

Stein, Serindin, 1069-70, pl. 107, 108, 122; Whitfield, Art, 3:9. Whitfield and Farrer, Caves

no. 89; Kieschnick, "Monk's Robe", 25 n. 49

- MAS 856 (Ch.lv.0028) The British Museum, H: 107 cm w: 149 cm Silk and bast fibre CAVE 17
- is typical) of all but one suggest that they were made rule; however, the large dimensions (370 cm x 700 cm Shoso-in would seem to be obvious exceptions to this twenty-five columns in the South Section of the kāṣāya of seventeen, twenty-one, twenty-three, and seven-column kāṣāya in the eighth century. Eight 3 Izutsu, Kesa shi, 76, discusses the predominance of attire in medieval China. discussion of the symbolism of Buddhist monastic

2 See Kieschnick, Impact of Buddhism, for an extensive

ever, an authoritative report on the weave structures,

supplied in Whitfield, Art. At the time of writing, how-

discussion of the techniques and designs of each of its

this piece and a detailed, if sometimes questionable,

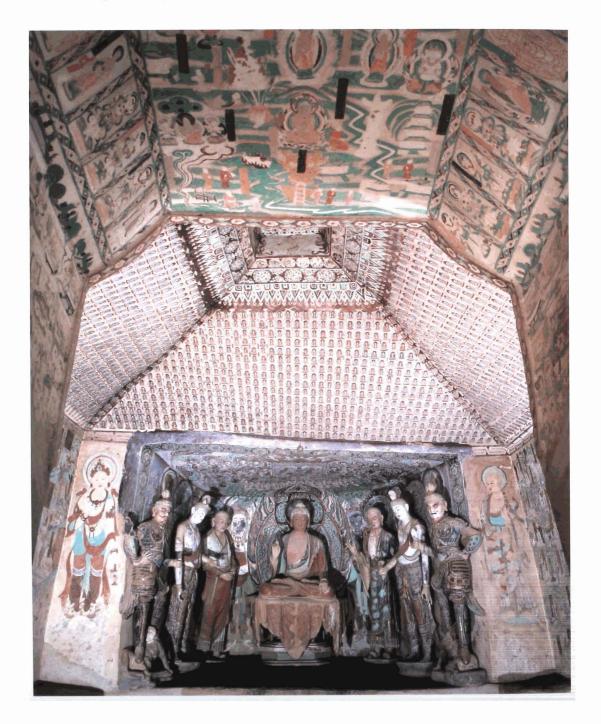
specialist in early Chinese textiles has yet to be

component segments. A more reliable analysis is

1 Stein, Serindia, provides a numbered illustration of

techniques, and dating of each section by a

- with purple kāṣāya robes, initiated by Empress Wu Chinese imperial tradition of rewarding elite clergy discussion of the implications and repercussions of the 4 See Adamek, "Robes Purple and Gold", for further to be draped around Buddhist sculptures instead of
- of Buddhist seating mats of similar size to the Stein The South Section of the Shosō-in contains a number











213 Cave 45 at Dunhuang

Original built 650–780: restored Pigments on plaster Replica exhibited: The Dunhuang Academy Museum, Cave 45 (replica) Whitfield, Dunhuang, 1335-7 Details of Cave 45

[Opposite] The seven statue grouping in a niche on the west wall showing Buddha in the centre flanked by his disciples Ānanda and Kāšyapa (wearing kāṣāya, see cat. 212), two bodhisattuas and two Guardian Kings. The two painted figures, added in the middle Tang (781–847) are Avalokiteśvara and Kṣitigarbha, two of the most popular bodhisattvas of the Eastern Silk Road. The ceiling above contains multiple images of Buddha, probably made with a stencil (cat. 216).

The ceiling of the niche is painted with a scene from the *Lotus Sutra* [above 3] showing Prabhūtaratna and Śākyamuni Buddhas seated in the centre on either side of a jewelled *stūpa*.

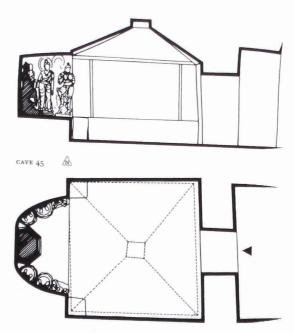
The north wall [not illustrated] depicts the Sutra on Visualizing Amitāyus. The south wall shows Avalokiteśvara in the centre [above 1] flanked by scenes from chapter 25 of the Lotus Sutra, showing the bodhisattva as a saviour of those in peril. In one scene a prisoner is seen after his chains have been broken and the prison door opened [above 2]. Below is a scene showing sailors threatened by all manner of water monsters.

Cave 45, one of 50 caves built during the High Tang (650-780), is typical of caves of this period when Dunhuang was in close contact with China as well as its Silk Road neighbours. Buddhist art had become sinicized and sophisticated and reflected the fashions of the Chinese capital. The cave is in the most crowded part of the cliff face and has been damaged by general weathering and scouring sand.

The cave has an entrance chamber with a very short corridor linking it to the main chamber (fig. 34). A niche at the back contains a grouping of seven statues: Buddha, flanked by his disciples, Ananda (the young man) and Kāśyapa (the older man) both dressed in the kāsāya, or monk's outer robe (see cat. 212), two bodhisattvas and two Guardian Kings standing on demons. The painting of the ceiling of the niche shows a scene from the Lotus Sutra where a seven-jewelled stupa emerges from the earth. Prabhūtaratna, the form of buddhas of past ages, is shown praising Śākyamuni, the historical buddha.

The thousand Buddha decoration on the slope above the niche is a ubiquitous decoration in the caves, hence they are also commonly known as 'the Thousand Buddha Caves'. Multiple images such as these were often made with stencils (cat. 216). The repeated images continue onto the ceiling.

The paintings to either side of the niche date from the Tibetan period (781-848) and depict Avalokiteśvara and Ksitigarbha. On the Eastern Silk Road, in China and in Tibet Avalokiteśvara had become the most popular among the bodhisattvas as shown by the many banners and paintings depicting him in his various forms (see cats. 123-4 and 238-9) and the many copies of chapter 25 of the Lotus Sutra, which tells of Avalokiteśvara helping



those in distress (cat. 184). The large painting on the south wall illustrates this and another chapter of the Lotus Sutra, showing a large figure of Avalokitesvara at the centre. The scenes, which are explained by cartouches giving appropriate quotations from the sutra, show merchants being held up by bandits, a group of boatmen besieged by water monsters and a prison (with a prisoner peeking out) with cangues and chains outside.

The opposite wall depicts another sutra, Amitāyurbuddhānusmṛtisūtra possibly apocryphal.

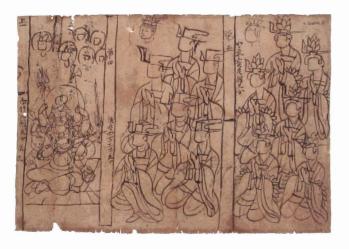
Fig. 34 Plan of Cave 45



The Preparation of Buddhist Paintings (cats. 214-217)

214 Sketches for Sutra of Golden Light

9th to 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 29.7 cm W: 43 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.83 (Ch.00208.b) Stein, Serindia, 976; Waley, Paintings, no. 83; Whitfield, Art, 2: fig. 89; Fraser, Performing the Visual, 68-71, figs. 2.9a, 2.9b



215 Sketches for the Sutra of Maitreya's Paradise

9th to 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 25 cm W: 255 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.259

Giles, Catalogue, no. 1080; Fraser, Performing the Visual, 62-68, figs. 2.6a-d



9th to 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17

Ink on paper H: 32.5 cm w: 28 cm The British Library, IOL Tib J 1361

216 Stencil for Buddha



217 Sketches of mūdra

Late oth century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 15.4 cm W: 143.5 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.83* (Ch. 00143) Stein, Serindia, 892, 966, pl. 98; Waley, Paintings, no. 83°; Whitfield, Art, 2: Fig. 101; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, no. 73; Fraser, Performing the Visual, fig. 3.2

The four ink drawings exhibited here represent two important areas of ritual life and practice at Dunhuang: the preparation of paintings for patrons and the regular practice of rituals by Buddhists in the mediaeval Gua and Sha prefectures where the Mogao caves are located. None are finished works. Although many later Chinese paintings are executed in fine-line ink, known as baimiao 白描, these materials from ninth- and tenthcentury Dunhuang predate that eleventhcentury development. Executed in modulated lines typical of drafts they reflect activities that contributed to the making and celebration of Buddhist works in the temple.

Two drawings may be linked directly to the execution of cave wall paintings. The sketches for the Sutra of Golden Light (Suvarnaprabhāsasūtra, cat. 214) and the Sutra of Maitreya's Paradise (Maitreyavyākaraņasūtra cat. 215) are drafts for large murals that were painted in the cave-temples dating to the Guiyijun period (848-960). The finished mural compositions for the Sutra of Golden Light are often approximately 3.25 m wide; the sketch sheets, containing only select sections of the wall painting, are much smaller measuring only 43 cm in length. These drafts correspond to sections of Golden Light wall paintings in caves 55, 85, 138, 156, and 196 at Dunhuang.1 The drawings are scattered over three sheets and now in two collections (a third sheet is in the Bibliothèque nationale de

France). Each contain abbreviated groups of figures with their hands pressed together in attentive worship; in the finished painting they are assembled around the Buddha positioned at the composition's centre.

Next to each section in the ink drawings are cartouches identifying the figures. They include: worshipping kings; princes; highranking women; armoured Guardian Kings of the four directions; yakṣa (earth deities); and Sarasvatī, the goddess of wisdom. The artist uses a shorthand to indicate their placement within a larger composition. Their intended order in the mural is indicated by region and numerical placement; the artist writes 'middle section, number three', 'middle section, number four, 'upper [section], one', etc. This provides a simple guide to their final placement in lieu of making an entire sketch of the whole composition.

One long scroll contains drawings for Maitreya's Paradise in which the artist concentrates on ten figure groupings that are central to the painting's meaning, the celebration of an easy, fruitful existence after the arrival of the future Buddha, Maitreya. Each of the scenes occupies a large space spread across the back of a damaged sutra extending 2.41 m long by 25 cm wide. These episodes correspond to the areas in the upper and lower right of the central paradise terraces in a mural in cave 196 that depict events before and after Maitreya's arrival. The scroll opens with a large wedding banquet; in Maitreya's world women marry after five hundred years to forestall the pain of childbirth. A group of ladies is gathered around a large table inside a tent while two men and two women present themselves outside on a mat.

The next vignette in the sketch references the productive harvest in Maitreya's realm. Farmers reap bounty far greater than they sow. The drawing depicts a farmer urging his two work oxen to plough a plot with a wooden switch. At the end of the scroll the

productive harvest yields bountiful wheat cut by a woman skilfully wielding a sickle; a man threshes stalks of grain. Others toss the grain and sort the harvest into bushels. The scroll appears to continue although it is cut or damaged at the edge of a mule harness.

In the scroll's middle section, the scenes explain the painless death in Maitreva's future realm. They correspond to the section in the sutra that describes the voluntary removal to one's tomb upon impending death. Relatives visit the grave to bid farewell to the dying; later they pay respects at a family shrine where a prostrate figure wails at the tomb of a deceased. A couple stands respectfully in prayer at the structure's left side.

A previously unpublished, uncatalogued pounce from the British Library's cache of manuscripts is from the Tibetan period (781-848) at Dunhuang (cat. 216). Eight similar pounces were found in Cave 17. These designs, with holes punctured at intervals along thick, black lines, were used to produce the repetitive Thousand Buddha designs on cave ceilings painted in the ninth and tenth centuries. The ceilings' motifs echo the alternative name for the site, which is 'Caves of the Thousand Buddhas'. The upper sections of cave-shrines were difficult for artists to reach and the design demanded the execution of identical figures. The pounce was a professional tool meant to solve these conditions of work and the demands of the subject matter. It efficiently allowed artists to make multiple Buddhas of nearly identical size and shape. The pounce was placed against the wall; powder was applied over its surface. When removed, a skeleton of dots remained on the wall. Artists then painted over these with an array of bright colours. Painters also varied the Buddha's mūdras (hand positions) alternating pounces with slight variations. In this example, the figure's left hand is raised in vitarka (discussion) mūdra while the other rests palm up; in other versions both hands are positioned in dhyāna (meditation) mūdra.

Cat. 217 shows mūdras drawn carefully in rows interspersed occasionally with figures of bodhisattvas. This scroll is most likely a reference text for monastic practitioners or artists. In this sense, it is also not a finished work but a guide or aid for completing other paintings or performing rituals in the temple.

SEL

For a complete study see Fraser, Performing the Visual,



218 Paradise of Śākyamuni

Whitfield, Art, 1:8

Mid- to late 8th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and colours on silk H: 177.6 cm W: 121 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.12 (Ch.liv.004) Stein, Serindia, 1058-59; Stein, Thousand Buddhas, pl. 6.; Waley, Paintings, no. 12;

The decoration of the early caves at Dunhuang consisted of repeated Buddhas, prepared with pounces (see cat. 216) and jātaka scenes, but the preference in the larger

caves of the seventh and eighth centuries onwards was for paradise paintings in the central frieze of the side walls. The portable paintings found in Cave 17 date from this period and show many of the same themes, such as the paradise of Śākyamuni, the historical Buddha, shown in cat. 218 (and cat. 198).

There are three 'bodies' of the Buddha: the dharmakāya, which is the buddha in its most abstract form; the sambhogakāya, which is buddha in the form of pure light; and the nirmānakāya, which is buddha in human form. Here Buddha is depicted in the sambhogakāya form, the body usually taken by buddhas in their respective paradises. The Pure Land sutras that became so popular in China and Japan claim that one can simply be reborn in a buddha's paradise by reciting that buddha's name.

On either side of the main painting are scenes from the Baoen Sutra, that concentrates on the blessings received and the duty one owes, for example, to one's parents, in respect of these.1

¹ A full discussion of these is given in Whitfield, Art and translations of the cartouches in Waley, Paintings, no. 12.

Decorating the Caves (cats. 219-24)





219 Paper-cut flowers 400-1000 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Paper H: 13 cm W: 13 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.11633A&B



220 Flowers for lotus blossom pool

4th to 5th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Miran Wood and unknown fibre: possibly 5 items: Diameter: c.5 cm Victoria and Albert Museum, Loan: Stein. 628 (M.iii.0013) Stein, Serindia, 495, 542



221 Votive relief plaque

11th to 12th century Stein, 3rd expedition: Dunhuang, gift of Wang Yuanlu Terracotta Diameter: 4.8 cm The British Museum, 1928,1022.24 (Ch.05) Stein, Innermost Asia, 359, 361, pl. 49; Whitfield, Art, 3: Fig. 15.



222 Stucco mould for casting a small seated Buddha

c.6th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Khadalik Stucco Diameter: 7.6 cm The British Museum, OA MAS 426 (Kha.ii.N.0014) Stein, Serindia, 190, pl.16; Whitfield, Art, 3: Fig. 52.



223 Canopy

700-900 Dunhuang Hemp with painted decoration H: 139 cm W: 139 cm Victoria and Albert Museum, Loan: Stein. 620 (Ch.00381) Kerr, Chinese Art, 92, pl. 34

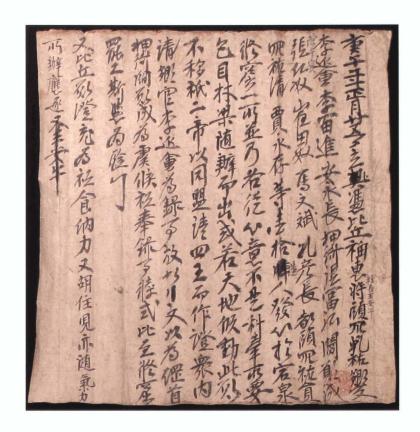


224 Canopy

9th to 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and colours on hemp cloth H: 52 cm w: 49 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.202 (Ch. lvi. 0025) Stein, Serindia. 1079; Waley, Paintings, no. 202; Whitfield, Art. 2: Fig. 77 Despite the wall to ceiling painting, the Mogao caves as they appear today are denuded of much of the decoration which would have once adorned the walls and the Buddha statues. A number of items in the Stein collection give some clues as to the additional decoration. These include small items to be stuck on to the walls by devotees, such as small papercut flowers like those shown in cat. 219. The cloth artificial flowers in cat. 220 were originally sewn on to a cloth model of a lake (M.iii.0026), probably meant to represent the Buddhist sacred lake, Sukhāvatī. These might also have been given as offerings at one of the many Buddhist festivals.

Some caves originally had a 3D frieze of the multiple Buddha images like that in cat. 221, made from stucco using a mould such as shown in cat. 222. Some few caves at Dunhuang and other contemporary temple sites still show such images plastered on to the wall and the small models of monks shown in cats. 226, 229 and 233 were probably also decorations for caves: a similar one found was found by Paul Pelliot in Cave 75.

In addition to these were the textiles that adorned both the Buddha statues and the walls, and canopies (cats. 223 and 224) such as those depicted in numerous paintings (see cat. 232) that were hung above the Buddha. Other textiles would have been draped over the statues as offerings, especially during major festivals; Kieschnick suggests that this may have been the use for the patchwork textile (cat. 212). It is difficult to imagine now but the caves full of offerings, colourful hangings, and other decorations, with the sound of prayers being recited and the smell of the hemp oil from the flickering lamps mingling with the incense offered to Buddha, must have had a very different atmosphere from today.



225 Pledge for the upkeep of cave temples

Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper н: 30.8 ст w: 30.5 ст The British Library, Or.8210/S.3540 Giles, "Dated VII", 160; Giles, Catalogue, no. 6325; 7 287-88; Tang and Lu, Shehui I, 278; TTD 3: 10; Yingzang 5:118; Rong, Guiyijunshi, 145; Ning and Hao, Sheyi, 29-31

The caves at Dunhuang were working shrines and the visitors, smoke and deposits from the incense and lamp oil along with the effects of the scouring sand took their toll on the paintings and sculptures. Donors therefore were required not only for the building and decorating of the caves in the first place, but also for their upkeep. In his essay (pp. 57-62) Rong Xinjiang mentions the large Maitreya statue that was renovated by the King of Dunhuang, Cao Yuanzhong. Cat. 225 is a pledge made by

sixteen men dated the twenty-fifth day of the first month of gengwu year (25 March 970) to make themselves responsible for 'the upkeep of the cave temples in the valley of the Dang River', that is, the Dunhuang caves. A monk, Fahui and the Club Elder Wang Anwu are the leaders of the group. 'Even if Heaven and Earth collapse, this vow shall remain unshaken. We pray the Two Emperors to partake in the oath and beg the Four Guardian Kings to bear witness to it.'

Worship at the Caves: Private and Public (cats. 226–241)

Cat. 226 is one of a group of plaques given to Stein by Wang Yuanlu on his second visit to the Dunhuang caves. Stein noted that while they were 'manifestly old... no information could be obtained about their exact provenance: the priest stated that he found them lying loose in the sand in one of the caveshrines that he had cleared since my last visit. But it seemed more probable that they had been removed by him from decorative stucco friezes' in the caves. Pelliot found a similar model in Cave 75 which he dated to the tenth century.

The earliest caves at Dunhuang were built in the mid-fourth century as meditation retreats for monks seeking to escape the bustle of the town. Meditation continued as an essential part of religious practice and some caves, especially at the quieter, northern part of the cliffs at Dunhuang, probably continued to be used for this purpose along with the side chambers in later, larger caves (and possibly this was the original use of Cave 17, the Library Cave).

Chan Buddhism (Zen in Japanese) originated in China where it became popular by the Tang period but its roots can be traced back to the historical Buddha Śākyamuni. The term 'chan' 禪 is the Chinese transliteration for the Sanskrit dhvāna meditation. Chan texts advocate meditation over other Buddhist rituals such as sutra reading, offerings or prayers. Defined in this way against formal ritual, Chan meditation was described as a formless, actionless practice. Texts from Dunhuang such as cat. 227 here, instruct the meditator to sit with legs crossed and a straight back and then in an instant to 'gaze at the mind'.

Probably dating from the tenth century, this is a collection of Tibetan works on Chan Buddhism. According to the later Tibetan tradition, Chan Buddhism was expelled from Tibet following the great debate that was held at Samye monastery in central Tibet around 797. The debate is said to have been sponsored by the Tibetan king Trisong Detsen to decide which Buddhist tradition Tibetans would follow, that of China or India. Later Tibetan accounts unanimously agree that the representative for the Chinese side, the Chan master Heshang Moheyan (who came

from Dunhuang), lost the debate to the Indian scholar Kamalaśīla. Because of their defeat, all Chinese followers of Chan Buddhism are said to have been immediately and permanently expelled from Tibet. Evidence from Dunhuang such as cat. 227, however, suggests that the influence of Chan Buddhism may have continued in Tibet well into the tenth century.

Both works in the manuscript discuss popular Chan themes. The second of the two texts is a Tibetan translation of the influential Chinese work, Record of the Lankavatara Masters and Disciples (Lenggie shizi ji 楞伽師資記; dateable to 719-20). The first text is particularly unusual for its synthesis of Chan with the teachings of Mahāyoga tantra. A Mahāyoga ritual manual from Dunhuang is seen in cat. 132. Just as Chan was supposedly banned from Tibet, the transgressive Mahā yoga teachings are generally thought to have been banned from China by imperial decree. Thus the present text represents an unusual synthesis of two distinct Buddhist traditions that were never meant to have met.

IPD

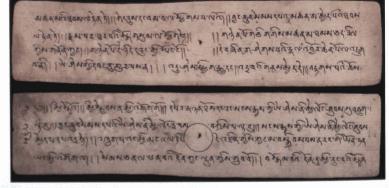


226 Model of monk in meditation

10th century or later Stein, 3rd expedition: Dunhuang, gift of Wang Yuanlu Clay with pigments H: 28 cm w: 18 cm The National Museum, New Delhi, 2003/7/1876 (Ch.0031) Stein, Innermost Asia, 359, 361, pl. 49

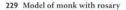
227 Chan text, translated from Chinese

10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 6 cm W: 27.3 cm The British Library, IOL Tib J 710



228 Note on rosary beads

8th to 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 30.5 cm w: 42.7 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.4243 Giles, Catalogue, no. 6734; Chen, Haitan, 178; Ren, Geci, zhong 924–13



10th century
Stein, 3rd expedition: Dunhuang,
gift of Wang Yuanlu
Clay with pigments
H: 29 cm w: 20 cm
The National Museum, New Delhi,
2003/7/1872 (Ch.0034)
Stein, Innermon Asia, 359, 362, pl. 49





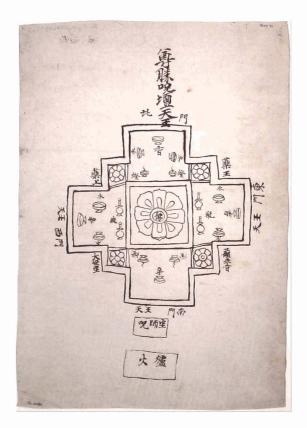
Rosary beads are used by Buddhist practitioners to count their recitations of prayers and mantras. Recitations are commonly associated with Pure Land and tantric ritual practice. Dunhuang manuscripts indicate that mantras were also used to worship statues. One work asserts that the efficacy of the recitation can by judged by observing an offering of milk: 'During the hours when the moon is dominated by the jackal, if the milk offered becomes yoghurt it is said to be a sign of accomplishment.' (P.tib.82)

The beads typically number 108, following an early Buddhist sutra, and can be fashioned from a variety of materials including seeds from the bodhi tree, sandalwood, crystal, or other semi-precious stones. The Dunhuang discussions of rosaries, such as the one displayed here, specify which material should be used to supplicate the deities of each respective buddha family.

This Chinese discussion of rosary beads in cat. 228 is preceded by an unidentified Sanskrit mantra in Tibetan script. Tibetan script also provides interlinear notes in the main body of the rosary text. The notes transcribe the proper pronunciation of the Chinese characters, which would suggest they were written by a Tibetan student of Chinese Buddhism.

Discussions of rosaries seem to have been popular in tenth-century Khotanese circles at Dunhuang. A Khotanese discussion of rosaries, IOL Khot 55, was found by Stein in Cave 17, as was the closely related IOL Tib J 688, written in Tibetan by a Khotanese scribe.

Cat. 229 is one of the small clay models of monks given to Stein by Wang Yuanlu and probably dating from tenth century or later, showing a monk with his rosary beads.



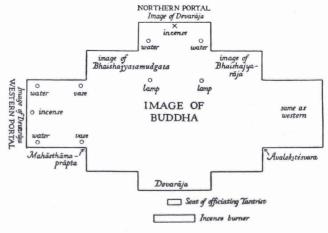


Fig. 35 Simplified transcription of cat. 230 After Waley, Paintings, 169.

230 Altar diagram, Usnīsa-vijaya dhāranī

9th to 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 44 cm W: 30.5 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.74 Stein, Serindia, 893, 974; BEEO, 28: 214; Waley, Paintings, no. 74; Whitfield, Art, 2: fig. 81; Zwalf, Buddhism, no. 324; Fraser, Performing

the Visual, 154-5, fig. 415

Dhāraṇī, or 'charm,' refers to both a genre of Buddhist scripture and the mantra-like spells found within those scriptures. For this reason, dhāranī are often understood as precursors to the Buddhist tantras that swept through Asia after the seventh century. Dhāranī texts typically describe the Buddha Śākyamuni teaching a Sanskrit spell specific to a given deity. The Buddha then goes on to proclaim the many benefits to be gained from reciting that spell, and to exhort his audience to copy, recite and propagate that dhāranī.

The diagram displayed here shows how to set up the ritual space for the recitation of the Usnīsa-vijaya dhāranī. The arrangements match the description that appears in a version of the scripture found in the Tibetan canon.1 Thus at the centre sits the buddha, which can be represented by either a stupa or a statue. Seated before this in the southern direction, at the location marked at the bottom of the drawing, is the practitioner. In the eight cardinal and intermediate directions other deities are also represented. Around the central image are arranged votive oil lamps, flower offerings, incense, and containers of water. The dhāranī then instructs the practitioner as follows:2

'Touch the buddha with your left hand, and then, holding a rosary in your right hand, recite the dhāraṇī three times each day for twenty-one days. Then if you drink those offering waters in three sips from your cupped hands, you will have no illness, your life will be long, you will never fall from purity, your intellect will be sharp, and your speech will be noble. If you sprinkle those waters around a barn or stables, or around a royal palace, there will be no fear of thieves, snakes, spirits or demons, and there will be no afflictions from illness...'

JPD

See Sarvatathāgata-uṣṇṣṣa-vijaya dhāraṇɨ (Peking 197).

² Peking 197, 223a.7-223b.1.

231 Censor - chased silver

Tang (618–907)
Eumorfolous Collection, acquired with the aid of the NACF: China Chased silver
H: 4.3 cm D: 7.5 cm
Victoria & Albert Museum
M.98-1938

The Dunhuang cave murals and portable paintings depict incense burners and censors but none have survived from the caves themselves. This finely worked silver censor, although contemporaneous, is probably from central China. Recipes of the time give the ingredients for incense. One includes aloeswood, sandlewood, storax, onycha, Borneo camphor and musk, all ground together, strained through gauze and mixed with honey.





233 Model of monk with scroll

10th century
Stein, 3rd expedition: Dunhuang,
gift of Wang Yuanlu
Clay with pigments
H: 27 cm w: 16.7 cm
The National Museum, New Delhi,
2003/7/1875 (Ch.0024)
Stein, Innermost Asia, 359, 362, pl. 49



232 Buddha preaching the law

Early 8th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and colours on silk H: 139 cm W: 101.7 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.6 (Ch.liii.001)

Stein, Serindia, 839, 851, 884–886, 896, 984, 1049, 1054–56, 1407; Stein, Thousand Buddhas, pl. 10; Waley, Paintings, no. 6; Whitfield, Art, 1: 7, Figs. 15–17; Whitfield and Farrer Caves, no. 1



934
Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang,
Cave 17
Ink on paper
H: 31 cm W: 548 cm
The British Library,
Or.8210/S.548
Giles, Catalogue, no. 4683



At the centre of Buddhist practice and worship were the Buddhist sutras, the lectures of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni transcribed by his later disciples. The theme of Buddha preaching is found on both the cave walls and the portable paintings from Dunhuang, such as cat. 232, one of the earliest paintings. Buddha is preaching to several monks and bodhisattvas, placed around him in a less formal manner than in later paintings. The Buddha sits under the bodhi tree where Śākyamuni attained enlightenment, protected by an elaborate canopy. An apsaras - flying goddess - is shown on the top right. These figures are common on the ceilings of the Dunhuang caves, often depicted playing musical instruments or bearing offerings.

Cat. 233 is another of the small statues

given to Stein by Wang Yuanlu and showing a monk reading a scroll (in contrast to the monks in the wall painting shown in fig. 28 depicted writing on pothī). Many of the sutras found in the Library Cave at Dunhuang were monastery library copies, indicated by a library stamp, and were used for private and public recitations and study. But monks also kept their own copies of sutras, as in cat. 234 here which has a note on the back, 'Kept for reading and recitation by the monk Huiding. His friends are asked not to take it away.' This and cat. 235 are copies of the Buddhanāmasūtra, Book of Buddha's Names, and one form of worship was to recite the names of the buddhas of the seven stages given in this sutra. Cat. 235 contains small painted Buddhas at the start of each line and

this probably is the product of a ritual practice which involved painting the buddhas (see also cat. 249).

Whereas Chan was a Chinese sect that could trace its roots back to Indian Buddhism (cat. 227) the Three Stages Sect (Sanjiejiao 三階教) was founded in the Sui dynasty (589–618) by a popular Buddhist preacher whose patron was an important minister of state. The sect taught that it offered the sole route to salvation and also that, in the age of apocalypse, no government could exist worthy of the respect of Buddhists. The sect was proscribed several times over the Sui and Tang because of its perceived socially divisive and potentially revolutionary teachings (its insistence that monks should not accept charity or pay patronage of any kind also made it



235 Book of Buddha's Names

9th to 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and pigments on paper H: 27.5 W: 245 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.253

Giles, Catalogue, no. 4677

unpopular among the Buddhist establishment, as Lewis points out).2 Its writings were banned from the canon as apocrypha, rather than the true words of the Buddha, and it was only with the discovery of Cave 17 at Dunhuang that many of its texts were retrieved.

The Book of Buddha's Names in sixteen rolls was listed among the apocrypha in Kaiyuan shijiao lu 開元釋教錄(Record of Śākyamuni's Teachings Compiled during the Kaiyuan Period), compiled by Zhisheng in 730. He lists 406 titles in this section, including those of doubtful authenticity and the clearly spurious. He rejects this particular sutra on textual grounds, as a 'haphazard mixture of lewd, vulgar language with sacred words' and because it also makes the mistake

of referring to the travels of the fourthcentury Chinese monk, Faxian, as a sutra.3

Another thirty-nine texts of the Three Stages Sect were included in this list, referring to imperial bans on the sect's teachings in 600 and 725 ('All Sanjiejiao compilations are banned and should be eliminated and destroyed. ... Those who do not collaborate will be forced to disrobe.)4 Despite these proscriptions, however, the presence of these texts in Dunhuang shows that the sect continued to have its adherents.

- 1 Yabuki, Sangaikyo and Lewis, "Three Stages Sect" for further details.
- Lewis, Ibid.
- Tokuno, "Indigenous Scriptures", 36.
- 4 Ibid. 57.



236 Banner with Khotanese inscription

700-900 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Silk with resist-dyed patterns, and self-patterned with plain silk Max. L: 131 cm Victoria and Albert Museum, Loan: Stein. 621 (Ch.i.0022) Stein, Serindia, 1012; Kerr, Chinese Art, 90, pl. 33





237 Banner

700-900 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Silk with resist-dyed patterns, and self-patterned with plain silk Max. 1: 131 cm Victoria and Albert Museum, Loan: Stein. 619 (Ch.00342) Stein, Serindia, 989; Kerr, Chinese Art, 90, pl. 33



238 The thousand-armed thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara

Mid-10th century Stein 2nd expedition: Dunhuang Cave 17 Ink and colours on paper H: 49.8cm w: 29cm The British Museum. 1919,0101,0.159 (Ch.00386) Stein, Serindia, 995; Waley, Paintings, no.159; Whitfield, Art 2:70; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, 66

239 Water and moon Avalokiteśvara

Stein 2nd expedition: Dunhuang Cave 17 Ink and colour on paper H: 82.9 cm W: 29.6 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.15 (Ch.i.009) Stein, Serindia, 867, 1010, pl. 79; Waley, Paintings, no.15; Whitfield: Art 2: 52; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, 57







240 Samantabhadhra

Late 9th to early 10th century Stein 2nd expedition: Dunhuang Cave 17 Ink and colours on silk H: 219.4 cm W: 115.2 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.33 (Ch.xxxvii. 003) Stein, Serindia, 843, 881, 1040-1; Waley, Paintings, no. 33, 34; Whitfield, Art 2:13; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, pl.17

241 Mañjuśrī

Late 9th to early 10th century Stein 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and colours on silk H: 218.7 cm W: 114.8 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.34 (Ch.xxxvii. 005) Stein, Serindia, 843, 881, 1040–1; Waley, Paintings, no. 33, 34; Whitfield, Art 2:14; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, pl.18

Apart from the various forms of worship and ritual practised by the clergy, the caves were also open to worship by the lay community, both for private and public worship. The year at Dunhuang was punctuated by feast days and festivals when the monastic and lay communities joined together in worship. Evidence of the feast days (vegetarian feasts) is found in the many club circulars (cat. 189) and monastic accounts (cat. 207) from Dunhuang, where donations of food are recorded from all ranks of Dunhuang society. The festivals, which were public holidays, involved all levels of Dunhuang society and included numerous entertainments and games, as well as processions, feasts, charity and worship.1 The sixth and seventh day of the second month, for example, was the Procession of the Statues in Dunhuang sponsored by lay associations. The Festival of the Dead (Yulan pen) was another major festival, taking place on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the seventh month.

The banners and paintings from Dunhuang were made for the same purpose as the cave paintings and statues and the copies of Buddhist texts: for the gaining of merit and for focus of worship. The banners and paintings were made to be hung, some from long sticks to be used in Buddhist processions and others at both indoor and outdoor ceremonies in the various monasteries and cave temples. from the major festivals to initiation ceremonies and private masses for the dead.

The banners and paintings therefore reflect both their purpose and the means of their donors, and range from fairly crudely painted banners on paper and hemp to sophisticated and complex paintings on several widths of the finest silk.

The two banners shown here (cats. 236, 237), unlike many from Dunhuang, contain no paintings. They are made from several pieces of dyed silk and one contains a scrawled line and a half of Khotanese that reads: 'In the year of the sheep, on the 26th day of the month Rarūya, Thyai gave order to give it to you, in love of Bodhi. May all his wishes and resolves succeed! Reverence!?2 - showing the continued presence of Khotanese monks at Dunhuang.

Cat. 238 is a painting on paper, showing a very simplified version of a common manifestation of Avalokitesvara, the thousandarmed, thousand-eved form (see cat. 124). This image however, only shows ten arms in any detail, the rest indicated in the aureole. Although the iconography is clear, the execution suggests a poor donor who could neither afford silk nor a professional artist. By contrast, cat. 239 is a more accomplished image

on silk showing Avalokiteśvara in a popular Chinese form, the so-called Water and Moon Guanyin ('the great compassionate bodhisattva, saviour of those in distress, reflector of the moon in the water').

The curved form of cats. 240 and 241 is unique among the Dunhuang portable paintings, suggesting these paintings were designed to hang below a barrel vaulted ceiling. But none of the Dunhuang caves take this form, although it is found in caves further west in Bezeklik (near Turfan) and Kizil (near Kucha). The two bodhisattvas are often found paired together, Samantabhadra, the bodhisattva of law and compassion on his mount, a white elephant, and Manjuśri, the bodhisattva of wisdom and intelligence, on his lion. The elephant was, of course, indigenous to India and thus an understandable animal to be included in Buddhist iconography. The lion originated in Persia and is only found in India in small numbers. In China the lion, called 'Buddha's dog', became a very popular symbol in Buddhism as a protector of the Buddhist law and appears in numerous paintings, images and statue groupings flanking Buddha (see, for example, cat. 262).

- 1 See Gernet, Buddhism, 201-6 for a summary of the main festivals
- 2 P.O. Skjærvø (personal communication).

Divided Images (cats. 242a & b)

242a & b Sections of the painting of Famous Images of the Buddha

7th to 8th century
Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang,
Cave 17
Ink and colours on silk
Whole painting H: 6.310 cm
w: 6.200 cm
The British Museum,
1919,010,0-51 (Ch.xxii.023)
Stein, Serindia, 1024-6, pl. 70; Stein, Thousand
Buddhas, pl. 14; Waley, Paintings, 51; Soper
"Famous Images"; Whitfield, Art 2: 11,
figs. 9a-f

The section shown in cat. 242a here of the fragmentary painting of Famous Images of the Buddha was originally at the top of the left half of the whole painting. It comprises two whole scenes and the left side of a third. Although none of the inscriptions that would have accompanied these scenes is still legible, it is possible to guess at the identity of both the first and the third scenes.

The first scene shows two buddhas standing side by side on a single dais. They bear a striking resemblance to two buddhas standing side by side inside a building labelled as the Ganquangong 甘泉宮 or Palace of the Sweet Spring, on the north wall of Cave 323 at Dunhuang. There they are identified as the famous jinren 金人 (Golden Man or Men) seized by General He Qubing on his military expedition against the Xiongnu, in the reign of Emperor Wudi (r.140-87 BC). Their inclusion here, at the top of the painting, may very well be intended to place them at the very outset of the introduction of Buddhism to China, even though there is nothing in the historical record to confirm that the jinren brought to Han China by He Qubing was an image or images of the Buddha. Just so, in the mural version in Cave 323, dating to the late seventh or early eighth century, Emperor Wudi is shown kneeling to worship the twin images, as if Buddhism had been introduced to China at that time, which was far from being the case.



The second scene of a large seated buddha is not easily identified, though the red robe and the well-characterized bystanders may eventually offer clues to its identity. The third scene, on the other hand, is easily identified and was to prove one of the most popular in the mural paintings at Dunhuang. The ladder is the clue to the story of a thief who coveted the jewel in the forehead of a standing image of the Buddha. The ladder was never quite long enough for him to reach the prize. Eventually, however, the image itself bent low enough so that the thief could grasp the jewel, itself a metaphor for salvation attained through persistent effort, however unworthy the original intent might appear.

The shadow left after the removal of the silk border on the second fragment shown here (cat. 242b) shows that this image came from the right side of the Famous Images painting. The Buddha's teaching unceasingly serves to dispel ignorance, just as the sun and the moon cast light by day and by night. No caption survives to identify this image or its location, and a manuscript list of Famous Images simply states, 'Buddha pointing to the sun and moon'. (Or.8210/S.2113) The wording, however, recalls that of an inscription left on Mount Grdhakuta on behalf of the Tang Emperor by his envoy Wang Xuance in 645. At Dunhuang, it appears more than once in the triangular spaces at the corners of a recessed ceiling (see Caves 231 and 237).





Fig. 36 Reconstruction of the Famous Images of the Buddha painting from Dunhuang, now in the British Museum and the National Museum, New Delhi.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the many paintings discovered in 1900 in Cave 17 at Dunhuang. They provide an archive of Buddhist images, dating no later than around 1000, some to the eighth or even the seventh century. When found, they had been untouched for nine centuries, and so they are in many respects quite different from Chinese paintings of later date, and even from those few paintings that have survived in traditional collections. Most obviously, they were not rolled up, unlike traditional Chinese paintings that are rolled on a stave with a knob at either end for ease of handling, and to keep the painting hanging straight. Only the manuscript handscrolls from Cave 17 have elegant, red-lacquered knobs; Japanese handscroll paintings or emakimono have continued to follow this style, but Chinese handscroll paintings generally no longer have projecting knobs.

Instead of being laminated with a paper backing and rolled on a stave, the edges of the silk paintings from Dunhuang were protected by a doubled border, which might be of silk, or a stronger fabric such as ramie or hemp cloth, sewn in place on all four sides. The smallest paintings matched the width of the silk as woven on the loom, no more than about 60 cm from selvedge to selvedge. Larger sizes were obtained by sewing complete widths of silk together, or by cutting a length of silk in half down the centre, and sewing the two halves to the edges of an intact width of silk. Repairs seem to have been effected by pasting pieces of paper on the back of the damaged area; this practice may well have led to the type of mounting normally used today, in which the back of the whole painting surface is lined with two or more layers of thin paper to make a strong laminate that is still flexible enough to be rolled up for storage.

The painting of Famous Images, seen reconstructed here, was originally one of the largest assemblages, probably made up of three or even three and a half 60 cm widths of silk. Traces of a sewn-on border are visible as a shadow, about a centimetre wide, on the top and left edges. A tiny fragment of bright purple silk from this border is still attached to the large fragment from the Stein collection in the British Museum. It is more than likely that the rest of this extremely fine silk was detached from the painting in antiquity, to be re-used

elsewhere. Cat. 212 has four small rectangles of a very similar silk, placed for maximum effect: perhaps cat. 212 is a 'purple' kāsāya of the kind that was conferred on monks of the highest rank, such as Hongbian, whose memorial chapel at Dunhuang eventually served as the hidden store of documents and paintings.

Lacking a roller or stave, paintings, unlike the long sutra scrolls, were simply folded up for storage. The older a painting, the more likely it was to fragment as the silk itself became brittle with age. In the case of this painting of Famous Images, only the left half was reasonably well preserved when first brought to London. It was then 6 ft 8 in or some 205 cm in height.1 Stein's expedition had been supported by the Government of India, as well as by the Trustees of the British Museum, and his collection was divided accordingly (see Frances Wood's essay, pp. 91-96). As several of the painted images depicted noted icons from India, it was decided that the best preserved of them should be remounted to give a less fragmentary appearance, and assigned to the Government of India, while the damaged top part, as well as fragments from the right side and the lower part of the painting, were mounted separately, and remained in the British Museum.

The physical evidence of borders and seams is invaluable in attempting the reconstruction of such a large painting. Unlike most of the other paintings from Dunhuang, there is no large central buddha figure and celestial assembly. This is because the painting does not illustrate the text of a sutra expounding the Buddha's teaching, but is a record of a series of individual images, each associated with a particular place. Originally, each had an inscription, identifying the image and its location, with a zan 符 or composition in its praise, inscribed in a rectangular cartouche. These cartouches, and small flowers in the remaining intervening spaces, are useful in determining the original arrangement. Roughly speaking, there are four rows, each with sufficient space for five images, but the arrangement is quite flexible, thus there are two standing images at the left in the top row, four smaller images at the left in the third row, while there remain only two images, more widely spaced to accommodate the rocky

landscape backgrounds of Mount Potalaka and of the Vulture Peak, in the fourth row. According to Stein, there were traces of a fifth row of figures, already destroyed.2 A large panel for a dedicatory inscription, with the remains of a female donor, has a seam that locates it near the middle of the lowest row.

The images give the impression of being remarkably faithful to the sculptures they represent; for instance a seated buddha in the third row appears to be an accurate representation of a buddha from Gandhara, although the apsaras musicians surrounding his aureole and the turtle-dragon throne are both unmistakably Chinese. Moreover, the wording of the inscriptions suggests that they, and the depictions themselves, may have been transcribed from another source. This could have been the lost work by Wang Xuance, who travelled to India in the mid-seventh century, accompanied by a craftsman, Song Fazhi, from whom he commissioned pictures of noted Buddhist images. On his return to Chang'an from his third Indian journey, in 661, Wang Xuance compiled an account of his travels, in ten rolls, with three rolls of illustrations, from which only fragments of text survive.3 The large painting of Famous Images must have relied on this source. Much later, it was probably this painting that was the model for several sets of Famous Images, reproduced in mural paintings of a number of cave-shrines at the Dunhuang Mogao caves.

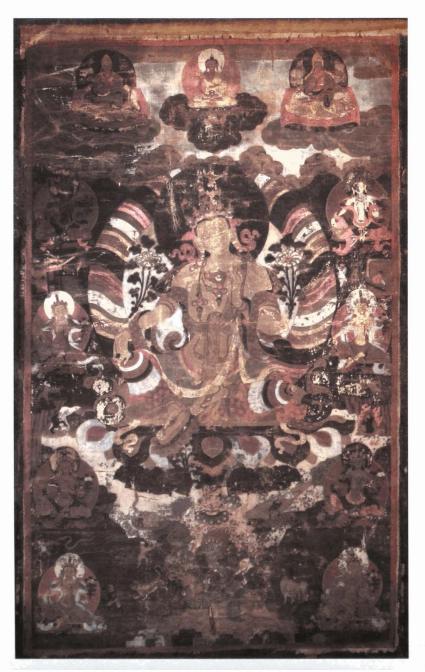
RW

¹ Stein, Serindia, 2: 1026: 'L. half ... as first mounted at Brit. Mus. 6' 8" × 3' 7".

² Ibid.: 'Below traces of another row of figs. now destroyed.

Lévi, "Missions", 297-341, 401-468; Pelliot, "Traduction Sanscrite", 351-2; Acker, Texts on Painting, 358.

The Perplexities of Iconography (cats. 243-4)



243 Tibetan Tārā

Period uncertain: 11th to 16th century? Ink and colour on hemp cloth H: 66.5 cm W: 40 cm The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.140 (Ch.lii.001)

Stein, Serindia, 1052; Stein, Thousand Buddhas, pl. 31; Waley, Paintings, 140; Whitfield: Art, 1: pl. 83

When Stein arrived at Dunhuang the Library Cave had been open for seven years. The cave guardian Wang Yuanlu by his own admission had already taken out all the contents of the caves and given some of the paintings and manuscripts to local officials.1 Stein did not immediately have the chance to examine the manuscripts and paintings in situ but was instead brought bundles by his Chinese secretary, Jiang Siye, selected by Wang.

The earliest dated document from the cave is from 406. Since there is other evidence that the Mogao cave site was first excavated in 366 and that Buddhism was becoming popular and widespread in Dunhuang around this time, a start date of about 400 for the undated manuscripts from the cave seems a reasonable and well-supported hypothesis. The end date is more problematic. The latest dated document is from 1002. The reason for the sealing of the cave is not known but it has always been assumed to be some time shortly after 1000 because of this. Early scholars suggested it might have been the threat of the Tangut invasion, which took place in 1035 but others have questioned this as the Tanguts were themselves Buddhist (and, in fact, contributed to several cave temples during their stay). More recently, Rong Xinjiang has suggested rather the Islamic Karakhanid push to neighbouring Khotan, which they took in 1006, was the most likely catalyst.2

Both these arguments take as a prior assumption that the manuscripts and paintings in the cave do not date from later than c.1000. There have been some anomalies. A manuscript with early nineteenth-century inscriptions, for example, has been discussed by Fang Guangchang who suggests that the colophons (one of which, dated to 1827, claims the manuscript came from Dunhuang) are genuine but that the manuscript came from another cave or elsewhere at Dunhuang.3 Other scholars rather take the opinion that the colophons are forged. The question of forgeries - of colophons, seals or whole manuscripts - has yet to be resolved.4 Japanese, Russian and a third Stein expedition all acquired more manuscripts from Wang Yuanlu after the cave had supposedly been cleared by the Chinese authorities in 1909. The holders of these collections suggest that Wang had removed and hidden some manuscripts from the authorities and these were the ones acquired by the later



Detail of yellow-hatted monk in cat. 243

expeditions. Wang was sceptical of the authorities; they had not given him any support when he originally found the Library Cave and he complained bitterly to Stein that funds assigned by them for his restoration work when they cleared the cave did not reach him. In addition, Pelliot had discovered Chinese, Mongolian and Tibetan manuscripts in Cave 464, dating from as late as the fourteenth century.

But even those scholars who argue that there are a large number of forgeries take as given that material from Stein's first visit to the caves in 1907 is genuine. Stein himself suggested however, that some of the bundles given him by Wang contained material originally from another cave.5 Cat. 243 is problematic in that it came from Stein's second expedition; it was not in the suspicious bundles and yet, based on certain stylistic and iconographical features, scholars have felt uncomfortable in assigning it a pre-eleventh century date.6 If it does come from later then it immediately throws open the question of the end date of the remainder of the manuscripts and



Detail of Śrī Devī at the bottom of cat. 243 with skullcap filled with blood

paintings: either it was brought from Cave 464 or elsewhere by Wang (but then other manuscripts and paintings; from elsewhere may also be among the material now provenanced as Cave 17 material, and not only those that Stein identified),⁵ or the cave was not sealed in 1000. The alternative is that it is pre-eleventh century, in which case scholars and art historians will need to reconsider their hypotheses of the iconography of this period.

The crux of the problem for many scholars is the presence of the two yellow-hatted monks at the top of the painting (p. 288). These are assumed to be part of the Tibetan school of Buddhism – the Gelugpa – that was, as we know from textual sources, only formed in the fourteenth century. There is also the iconography, with Avalokitesvara in his female tantric form as Tārā, surrounded by eight female bodhisattvas and with Śrī Devī with a skull cap filled with blood (see above). The iconography suggest the theme of Tārā and the eight fears (the space inbetween the main figures is filled with people in danger). The painting awaits a careful and detailed study.

- 1 See Stein's accounts.
- 2 For a discussion of the use and the closing of the cave see Rong, "Dunhuang Library Cave".
- 3 Fang, "Three Questions", 84. See also Rong, "Haiwai".
- 4 See Whitfield, "Dunhuang Manuscript Forgeries" for a discussion of this issue.
- 5 Stein, Serindia, 828–9. He was particularly suspicious of bundle xix. See also Rong, op. cit., 270.
- 5 Whitfield in Art (2: 83) writes that it is 'completely at variance with the remainder of the material found in Cave 17' and that 'since the style is entirely Tibetan or Nepalese, and in view of the two lamas seen at the top of the painting, the date must be considerably later than ... the eleventh century.' John Huntington (personal communication) on an initial examination of an image of the painting suggested it was rather of the style of a Chinese Ming period (1368–1644) popular painting. Christina Scherrer-Schaub, after long acquaintance with this painting, also holds to a later date (personal communication). Other scholars, albeit only having had access to a rather dark image, concur.

244 Deities of the Moon and Earth

Mid 8th to early 11th century Kocho, Ruin K Ink, pigments and gold paint on silk H: 10.4 cm W: 20.3 cm Museum für Indische Kunst, SMPK, Berlin: MIK III 6278 Le Coq. Chotscho, Taf. 4b; Klimkeit, Manichaean Art. 4s; Gulssi, Manichaean

Art, no. 79; Bhattacharya-Haesner, Temple

Banners, no. 64

This painted silk fragment derived from a larger textile of unconfirmed shape and function that once included what appears to be either a geometrical border (or part of the previous scene) along the right, and another framed scene on the left, now lost. The blue background and the black rim of the image define a cohesive composition of an imagined space in a landscape-like setting where a large moon is centred above groups of figures and pomegranate plants.\(^1\)

The main iconographic components of this scene make sense within a Manichaean context. The concepts represented here are well documented in primary literary sources, while the details of their depiction are in accordance with the visual language of Turfan Manichaean art. The moon, the 'ship of the night', is regarded as the vessel that transports the liberated light particles to the sun as well as the location where Mani and certain divine beings dwell, including 'The Maiden of Light', 'The First Man,' and 'Jesus the Splendour'.2 The waxing moon is shown here with a central figure, whose accessories (halo, headgear, earrings, cloak) and position (frontal erect upper body, hands on the lap, cross-legged sitting) are also employed in the portrayal of an unidentified dignitary on a Manichaean book painting.3 Unlikely to be Mani, this representation is best interpreted as one of the moon-dwelling deities, probably Jesus who is called ay tengri 'moon god' in Uighur texts.4 Next to the central figure are two worshippers, whose lower bodies are hidden from the viewer as if seated in a real ship. Beneath the moon on the right, a figure, standing under a fruit-bearing plant, raises its chin gazing up to the moon. The image of a tree laden with fruit is one of the most frequently evoked symbols in Manichaean literature, where the tree may stand for the church (or the auditors) and the



fruits for its members (or the alms of the auditors). Directly beneath the moon, two additional smaller figures gaze and point to a personified image of a fruit-bearing plant. In Manichaean literature, 'The Living Self' is present in all plants and trees. In addition, the fruit-bearing tree is used as a symbol of mythological beings and the prophets, especially Jesus and Mani, who both may be evoked as fruit-bearing trees of life.5 The depiction of the figures under the moon accords well with Manichaean art (including their folded arms, headgear with scarf arrangements and central disks, earrings, and their garments). While the individual components of this scene correlate with favorite themes of Manichaean literature and pictorial art, more detailed research is needed to present an identification for the composition as a whole. It is clear, however, that its theme involves the Recognition of Divine Presences on the Earth and in the Moon.

The Manichaean origin of this textile was suggested first by Albert von Le Coq based on the iconographic connotation of the *moon* and later by Hans-Joachim Klimkeit who also discussed the symbolic use of the *fruit-bearing tree*. They both considered the possibility of this fragment deriving from a textile-book.⁶ Their interpretation was aided by the fact that this silk piece was found in Ruin K of Kocho, often considered to be a Manichaean

temple due to the numerous fragments of Manichaean books, textiles, and wall paintings discovered there. A further visual link to the Manichaean artistic corpus was seen in the use of the *pomegranate motif*, favoured in Manichaean book illumination. Without debating the iconographic and contextual ties of this scene to Manichaean literary and visual sources, a Buddhist interpretation of the main elements was put forward recently by Chhaya Bhattacharya-Haesner. A Buddhist meaning and context for the complete scene are yet to be proposed. §

ZG

- 1 Parts of a landscape seem to be present along the bottom centre. Although often employed in Manichaean painting without being a night reference, the blue background together with the moon gives the impression of a night scene.
- 2 Klimkeit, Manichaean Art, 46; and Arnold-Döben, Der Bildersprache, 165–170.
- 3 MIK III 4970 c verso(?), see Gulácsi, Manichaean Art, pp. 116–119, fig. 50.2
- 4 Klimkeit, Manichaean Art, 46.
- 5 Ibid., 46; and Arnold-Döben, Der Bildersprache, 7–40, especially 20–30.
- 6 Le Coq, Chotscho, discussion of plate 4b; and Klimkeit, Manichaean Art, 46.
- 7 For the pomegranate used as a token-motif in the formation of the corpus of Turfan Manichaean art, see Gulácsi "Identifying the Corpus", 197–8; For the visual analysis of this image, see Gulácsi, Manichaean Art, 174 and note 230.
- 8 Bhattacharya-Haesner, Temple Banners, 98-100.

Travelling Iconographies: The Three Rabbits (or Hares?) (cats. 245–46)



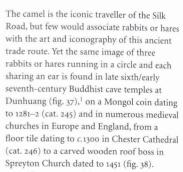
Fig. 37 Image of the apex of the painted ceiling in Cave 407 at Dunhuang showing the Three Hares inside a lotus dating to the Sui period (589-618).



245 Ilkhanid Coin

1281-2 (680 AH) Mint: Urmiya Copper Diameter: 2.5 cm Private collection

Reverse: Three hares in centre. The mint/date formula (circular inscription) reads in full: bismi llāh duriba hādhā l-fals al-mubārak bi-urmiya sanat thamānīn (wa sittimi'a). 'In the name of God the blessed fals was struck in Urmiya in the year six hundred and eighty'.



The mystery of the rabbits' journey is yet to be solved, most especially where it originated (Sasanian Persia has been suggested) and how it changed from a symbol of Buddhism, through an Islamic use to one in Christianity.2 Solving this mystery will involve the collaboration of historians of art, textiles, coins, religions and texts along the extent of the Silk Road. The three rabbits thus exemplifies our comparative lack of understanding of the Silk Road's rich cross cultural influences.3



246 Floor tile from Chester Cathedral

c.1300 Nave of Chester Cathedral Ceramic H: 13.5 cm W: 13.5 cm D: 2.4 cm Grovesnor Museum, Chester City Council Photograph: Chris Chapman Greeves, "Three Hares", 62



Fig. 38 Wooden carved ceiling boss in Spreyton Church dated to c.1451 and showing the Three Hares motif. Photograph: Chris Chapman

- 1 The example shown in fig. 37 is only one of at least sixteen found in caves dating from the Sui (581-618) to the Tang (618-907). All seem to be placed within the lotus. Ouyang, "Lianhua tan", identified ten. Further identifications have been made by Wei Zhang and Peter Ramussen.
- 2 Initial interpretation of the three rabbits as a symbol of the Christian trinity has been questioned. Greeves, "Three Hares", points out that in at least nine cases the hares are placed next to a Green Man or foliate head design which makes fertility and the moon strong candidates for explanation. The three hares is also found on a painted ceiling in a synagogue (see Greeves, "Medieval Mongol Mystery").
- 3 I am indebted to David Singmaster who first brought my attention to this symbol and to the members of the Three Hares Project, especially Sue Andrews, Tom Greeves and Chris Chapman for information and images. Further details can be obtained from: threehares@btinternet.com

As well as complete manuscripts and paintings, Cave 17 at Dunhuang contained many fragments of silk of different weaves and brightly dyed, as shown in cats. 248a-h here. In addition, many of the fragments now in the British Museum are large sections of damaged paintings. For the purposes of this study, samples of individual silk fibres and small areas of woven silk with coloured paint were taken for pigment identification and examination of woven threads. The results of the current investigation provide a wide range of Chinese pigment and dye identifications,1 and they are from a relatively small number of paintings thus closely defining the artists' palette.

Samples

Seventy-two samples of pigmented fibres and cloth from twenty-five painting fragments were taken from a representative range of colours including black ink lines from the outlines of picture elements (eg. fig. 39). The weave of the silk cloth was clearly visible under the painted pigments of some cloth samples and variations in pigment thickness would correspond to differences in colour densities on the paintings. Other cloth samples with very little pigment show the silk threads in their natural state and colour, which allowed study of the silk weave. Dyed fibres were easily distinguished as they were free of surface particulates and the colours of the red and blue samples appeared fresh and bright within the translucent fibres.

Methods

The samples were mounted onto carbon discs on aluminium stubs for manipulation within the analytical instruments. Examination was carried out using two complementary, nondestructive techniques. Scanning electron microscopy with microanalysis (SEM/EDX) was used for observation of silk weaves and elemental analysis of small areas of pigment. Raman spectroscopy was used for precise location and identification of individual mineral crystals of coloured pigments within the binding medium. The red and blue dyes were analysed by HPLC-PDA analysis at the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, Brussels.

Threads and woven cloth

The cloth samples with little or no pigment revealed threads consisting of numerous, non-





247 Rainbow fragment of wool

Stein, 3rd expedition: Loulan Dved wool, woven 5 cm × 4.8 cm Victoria and Albert Museum, Loan: Stein. 585 (L.C.v.o4) Stein, Innermost Asia, 255

248a-h Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and purple silk fragments

Tang dynasty (618-907) Stein 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Dyed silk a) 10 cm × 2.4 cm b) 11.6 cm × 6.3 cm

c) 5.7 cm × 5.2 cm d) 6 cm × 4 cm

e) 13 cm × 4.4 cm

f) 19.2 cm × 2.5 cm

g) 11 cm × 3 cm Victoria and Albert Museum,

Loan: Stein. a) 658 (Ch.00488); b) 639 (Ch.00236); c) 459 (Ch.00256); d) 455 (Ch.00325); e) 463 (Ch.00436); f) 671 (Ch.00495b); g) 465 (Ch.00314) Stein, Serindia, 1006, 982, 983, 988,

1000, 1006, 988

twisted, thin, long fibres of fairly uniform width (c.12-15 micrometers wide). The fibre surfaces were essentially featureless, relatively smooth and slightly flattened, typical of silk.

Samples of woven cloth showed variations among weave types. For example, fig. 40 clearly shows the weave below the thinly applied areas of pigment. The silk is a tightly woven balanced plain or tabby weave2 with single ply warp and weft (1,1) and no twist (50 threads/cm by 40 threads/cm). A similar silk cloth with no pigment is shown in detail in fig. 41. The threads are closely woven and are flattened with the silk fibres lying parallel to each other with no twist. The thread density is the same.

Sample 15 (1919,0101,0.302) is particularly interesting with an unusual plain weave having pairs of warp threads (2 ply), distinctly spaced in a loose weave (fig. 42). The single weft threads pass alternately over and under the warp pairs in the usual manner (1,1 weft) and these are also distinctly spaced as pairs creating an overall open weave. The thread density is 47 two ply warp/cm by 31 pairs, ie, 62 threads (1,1) weft/cm. Essentially three types of weave were noted, those with a tightly woven balanced plain weave, those with the twin ply warp and single weft, and those with plain weave with generally thicker warp threads and thinner weft threads. None of the threads are twisted.3



Fig. 39 Colour picture of a typical multicolour fragment of painted silk from the Stein collection from which samples were taken for pigment analysis (Sample 72, 1919,0101,0.223(b)).

Pigment and dye identification In the original colour descriptions of the samples from the paintings there were twelve basic colours (orange, red, pink/flesh, purple, yellow, white, grey, blue, green, black, silver, brown). Analysis has identified the use of 16 specific pigments, plus several mixtures, and two dyes (table 1). The fact that more pigments and mixtures were identified in the pigment palette than noted in the original sample list of colours suggests that the original paintings had subtle shades of colour made up from the extended palette, which are not obvious from the aged paintings.

The majority of colours were produced by the use of individual pigments of finely ground natural coloured minerals,4 for example, the vermilion grains in fig. 43 are between 1 to 5 micrometres in size. Some mixtures were also used, in particular several

TABLE 1

Colour orange/red red dark red green green	Pigment red lead vermilion hematite atacamite malachite	Mineral formula Pb ₃ O ₄ HgS Fe ₂ O ₃ Cu ₂ Cl(OH) ₃ Cu2(CO ₃)(OH) ₂			
			blue	azurite	Cu ₃ (CO ₃) ₂ (OH) ₂
			blue	lazurite	NaCa)8(SO4,S,Cl)(AlSiO4)6
			white	white lead	2PbCO ₃ .Pb(OH) ₂
			white	calcite	CaCO ₃
			white	anhydrite	CaSO ₄ (anhydrous gypsum)
yellow	orpiment	As ₂ S ₃			
yellow	pararealgar	AsS			
brown/yellow	geothite	FeO(OH) (iron ochre)			
black	carbon ink	C			
silver	silver	Ag			
silver	tin	Sn			
Dyes					
blue	indigo	organic woad			
		(Isatis tinctoria L.) or indigo			
		species (Indigofera sp.or			
		Polygonum sp.)			
red	madder	organic (Rubia tinctorum L)			

Mixtures of pigments Colour Mixture

Dark red red lead/vermilion Orange red lead/orpiment Orange vermilion/red lead/orpiment Orange vermilion /orpiment vermilion/lead Crimson white Pink/flesh vermilion/lead

Dark purple red lead/hematite Orange/purple red lead/hematite Brown/red vermilion/hematite The painted coloured fields were commonly outlined by black thin lines to emphasise the picture elements that are key to the design, such as the outlined hands and folds in the robes on the figures depicted in the fragments (see fig 39). These black lines were identified as carbon ink, which was the traditional Chinese black drawing and calligraphy medium.⁵

There were also silver-coloured pigments of metallic silver, common in Chinese painting, and metallic tin which appears to be unusual. These were particulate pigments, rather than metallic threads interwoven in the silk.

The blue indigo dye could be from various plants, eg. *Polygonum tinctorum* (indigo, native Chinese plant) of the Polygonaceae family, or *Indigofera tinctoria* L. (indigo) of the Fabaceae family, imported into China from Sogdiana in 717.6 These yield the deep blue dye from their leaves. The red dye is madder *Rubia tinctorum* (L.) of the Rubiaceae family that has roots containing the red/orange/yellow dye, and has traditional uses in China.⁷

The red dye samples came from a large fragment of painting (some 60 cm x 38 cm) and the uniform extent of the colour suggests that the silk cloth was fully dyed with madder before adding the painted (silver) pattern. By comparison, most of the other picture fragments show painted fields of polychrome colour often with gradation of shades on an originally neutral silk-colour background.

NM, JA & LB

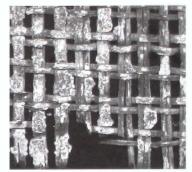
- 1 Winter, "Pigments". Early work on the pigments of the Stein paintings was published in Waley, Paintings, xlvi-xlvii. See also Gies, Les arts, 39–40 for identification of dyes on silk from the Dunhuang paintings in the Pelliot collection in Paris. For details of pigments used in China and their origins see Schafer, Golden Peaches, 208–14.
- 2 Zhao, Treasures in Silk
- 3 Techniques of silk weaving in ancient China are discussed in Kuhn, "Silk Weaving" and Sheng, "Silk Weaves"
- 4 Gettens and Stout, Painting Materials.
- 5 Wang, Chinese Painting; Van Briessen, The Way of the Brush; Silbergeld, Chinese Painting Style.
- 6 Schweppe, "Indigo and Woad" and Schafer, Golden Peaches, 212: the indigo was sent from the Sogdians in Samarkand.
- 7 Yu, Chinese Painting Colours.





Fig. 40 SEM image of a small piece of tightly woven plain weave silk showing three areas of pigment and two areas of dark ink. Top left and bottom are crimson (vermilion); the light triangular area is white lead and the dark bands between the colours are carbon ink. Scale marker is 2.0 mm. (Sample 60, 1919,0101,0.345.)

Fig. 41 SEM image of tightly woven silk cloth with very little surface pigment. Note the flat woven threads are not twisted, the individual silk fibres all lie parallel in each thread. Scale marker is 0.5 mm. (Sample 33, 1919,0101,0.398(a-i).)



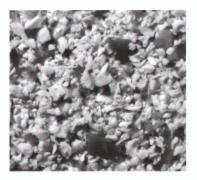


Fig. 42 SEM image of a piece of cloth with an unusual weave, showing the warp as double threads (2 ply) and the weft as pairs of threads that pass alternately over and under the warp pairs in the usual manner (1,1). Scale marker 1.0 mm. (Sample 15, 1919,0101,0.302.)

Fig. 43 SEM detail of an area of vermilion (HgS) pigment, x 1500. The grains are generally less than 5 microns in size. Scale marker is 20 microns (0.02 mm). (Sample 32, 1919,0101,0.398(a-i).)

249 Illuminated book fragments

889-1015 (C14 with 95.4% chance) Kocho: unspecified site Ink, pigments and gold leaf on paper H: 4.9 cm w: 4.05 cm Museum für Indische Kunst, SMPK, Berlin: MIK III 6265 & 4966c Ebert, "Darstellungen", fig.1994; Gulácsi,

Manichaean Art, no. 29 Gulácsi, "Dating the

'Persian"

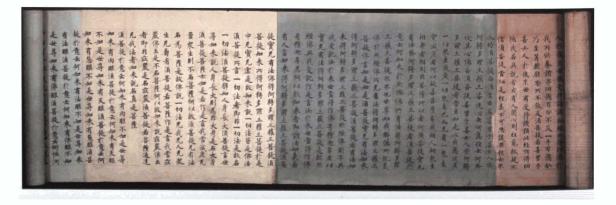
Analysis of the paintings at Dunhuang suggests the use of many of the same pigments used on the textiles as analysed above. On the Northern Silk Road from Gaochang west into Kizil a slightly different palette is seen used on both illuminated manuscripts (as cats. 5-8 and 249 here) and in cave paintings. The main difference is the use of lapis lazuli for blue. Lapis, mined in Badakshan (present-day Afghanistan) was sold to Chinese traders in Khotan and was known later as 'stone of Khotan' but it seems not to have been in common use as a pigment in China. It is, however, found in murals from Samarkand (see figs. 4-6 pp. 111-3), along the Northern Silk Road through Kizil to Gaochang.

The fragment shown here contains lapis blue, green from atacamite, red from red lead, cinnabar and madder, and probably white lead. There are a few letters only of Manichaean script of the unidentifiable text on the recto and verso. However, a line of Manichaean script runs vertically in the figure which identifies him as Ram Frazend.



250 Vajracchedikā in Chinese

600-900 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on variously-dyed paper H: 26.2 cm W: 428.7 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.4324 (Ch. 79.vi.13) Giles, Catalogue, no. 1262



251 Buddhist sutra

9th to 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Gold ink on dark blue paper H: 24.6 cm W: 26.8 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.5720(A) Giles, Catalogue, no. 4470

Yellow was the Buddhist colour of solemnity and the vast majority of Buddhist scrolls from Dunhuang are written on paper that has been dyed yellow (see, for example, cat. 138). Analysis of the dye on a selection of these manuscripts supports the hypothesis that the main dve was huangbo 黃檗, taken from the bark of the Amur Cork Tree (Phellodendron amurense) and still in use in China today.1 Analysis of twenty-five of the manuscripts has been carried out using various methods including High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC)2 and, more recently, on over twenty more manuscripts using FT-Raman Microscopy. Huangbo was detected on the majority. This dye also protected the paper against insects and gave it water-repellent properties.

Cat. 250, a copy of the Diamond Sutra (Vajracchedikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra) in the Chinese translation by the Central Asian monk, Kumārajīva, is unique in being made of twelve panels of differently coloured paper, including various shades of yellow, blue and green. There is no indication of why the scroll was made in this way nor is blue or green dyed paper commonly seen among the Dunhuang corpus. A few fragments of pink dyed paper survive from Cave 17 and some dyed bright orange, although this latter might have been an approximation to the yellow. By the end of the Dunhuang period, however, and in later Chinese tradition it became common to use silver or gold ink on dark blue paper (probably dyed with indigo) for the finest manuscripts.4 Cat. 251 is one of the few extant manuscripts showing this from Dunhuang.

- 1 Huangbo was not the only yellow dye others included chuanhuangbai 川黃柏 (Phellodendron sacchalinense and cihuang 雌黃 (orpiment or arsenic sulphide).
- 2 See Gibbs and Seddon, Berberine and Huangbo. 3 Burgio, "Pigments on Art Objects".
- Interestingly the Blue Qur'an, a manuscript copy of the Qur'an written in gold ink on parchment dyed dark blue exists from the ninth century. See Déroche, The Abhasid Tradition, 92-3.



Making Sutras (cats. 252-256)

252 Pen with horn burnisher

3rd to 4th century Stein, 1st expedition: Niya Tamarisk wood with horn 1: 16.5 cm The British Museum, 1907,1111.94 (N.xv.106) Stein, Ancient Khotan, 403, pl. 105

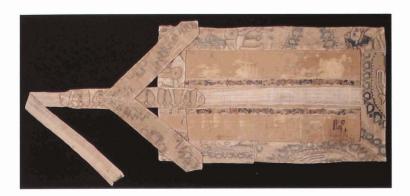
253 Glue brush

400-1000 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Wood and paper 1.: 23.5 cm The British Library, Or.8210/ S.13900



254 List of articles given to sutra copyists

c.932 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 30.2 cm W: 44.5 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.4211 Giles, Catalogue. no.7970; Yingtang 4: 269





255 Sutra wrapper

8th century
Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang,
Cave 17
Silk, paper and wood
H: 30.6 cm w: 48.6 cm
The British Museum,
MAS 858 (Ch.xlviii.oo1)
Stein, Serindia, pl. 11; Whitfield, Art, 3: 6

256 Sutra wrapper presented to the cave temples

the cave temples
948–64
Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang,
Cave 17
Ink on paper
13 ocm w: 43 cm
The British Library,
Or.8210/ S.2687 (Ch.84,v.13)
Giles, Catalogue, 10, 6713; Tang and Lu,
Shehui 3, 94–5; Yingzang 4; 190; Rong,
Guiyijunshi, 115, 121; Hao, Tanghouqi, 250;

Zongmu, 8

Much of the paper and many of the manuscripts from Dunhuang came from central China. The paper was made using a laid mould made from a wooden frame with a screen of bamboo, straw of day-lily stalks (forming the laid line pattern on the finished paper) held by hemp or horse hair threads (forming the chain lines). The frame was placed into a vat of paper pulp made from various fibres. Dominant among these on the Dunhuang papers analyzed to date was the bark of the paper mulberry tree (*Broussmonetia papyrifera*).¹ The paper was then sized and dyed before being inscribed.²

Cat. 252 is a wooden pen combined with a horn burnisher. The burnished – smooth – side of the paper was used for writing (although, as seen above, the verso or rough side was often employed later for another text). Cat. 253 is a rare find of a glue brush made from paper fragments, used for gluing the panels of paper together to make a scroll.

Copying sutras was often carried out by professional scribes, and Cave 17 held many manuscripts copied in the capital but also many copied locally to Dunhuang, some in scriptoria. Cat. 254 is a fragment detailing the articles given to sutra copyists, among them 'a pair of green embroidered shoes, one forged metal mirror and one set of utensils'. The manuscript lists eighteen copiers and eight laymen.

Groups of manuscript scrolls were bundled together in a cloth or bamboo sutra wrapper. The cloth wrappers were often reinforced with layers of paper taken from old manuscripts and many interesting manuscripts from Dunhuang have been found when the many wrappers were taken apart. Cat. 255 is one of the few among all the collections worldwide shown as a wrapper (although it was originally taken apart). There is a wooden stave at each end to strengthen it and the character 'kai' (open) is stamped on the inside. The design on the cloth, showing paired animals inside elliptical medallions, is typically Sasanian. Cat. 256 records the presentation of a sutra wrapper 'embroidered in a variety of colours' to the cave temples at Dunhuang by Mrs Zhai, wife of the ruler, Cao Yuanzhong, and another presented in 964.

- 1 Although the paper seems to have contained a mixture of fibres and there is not always agreement among fibre analysts. See Drège, "Dunhuang Papers", 116 for a summary and references.
- 2 Drège, ibid. suggests that dye was sometimes applied after inscribing.

From Scroll to Codex (cats. 257-260)





257 Whirlwind binding

984?
Stein 2nd expedition: Dunhuang,
Cave 17
Ink on paper
5 folios: H: c.30 cm w: 22.5, 30, 30,
50, 68 cm
The British Library,
Or.8210/S.6349

Giles, Catalogue, no. 6968; Chen, "Dunhuang Tang", 381–401; Wang, Dunhuang guji, 163–6; Yingzang 11: 28–38

258 Butterfly bound book

906 Stein 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper 17 folios; H: 13.5 cm w: 11 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.5451

Giles, "Dated V", 320; Giles, Catalogue, no.1378; Ikeda, Chügoku, no. 2133; Rong, Guiyijunshi, 215–6; Ten Kings, 98nn, 13,244 Cats. 132–141 showed how the traditional Chinese and Indian forms of the book – the $poth\bar{i}$ and the scroll – met at Dunhuang and produced interesting hybrids, such as concertinas (cat. 139). By the ninth and tenth centuries a further development is seen, with the appearance of many small booklets, used for Buddhist and non-Buddhist texts (for example, cats. 185, 195). Although a dominant progression can be traced through various forms of binding, just as with the concertinas, there are interesting variations along the way. One of these is seen in cat. 257, a so-called whirlwind binding.¹

This is a copy of a divination text, missing beginning and end and showing signs of much use. The colophon reads, 'Note of copying made at the shen hour [3-5 pm] of Jiaxu, the nineteenth day of bingchen, the sixth month of jiashen in the year series.' It consists of five sheets, all badly worn and patched and of different lengths, ranging between 22.5 cm and 80 cm.1 They are pasted on the left-hand side and holes were pierced through the paper and a split bamboo rod. The glued paper edges were placed between the two bamboo rods and held with string through the holes. For storage it was rolled around the roller. On first examination, therefore, it might be thought to be the remains of a scroll which, after much use, has come apart and been bound but the binding method is consistent with other examples found and suggests that

it was a recognized form. However, the text is not sequential from the recto of folio one to its verso and so on – only two sheets have text on the verso. The name 'whirlwind' appears in Chinese historical texts and a few other examples have been identified, although the form is rare.

Cats. 258 to 260 are more straightforward showing two forms of binding used at Dunhuang and probably throughout China at that time. Cat. 258 is a so-called 'butterfly' binding (hudie zhuang 蝴蝶裝) booklet of 17 folios. A butterfly bound book was made by folding sheets of paper in half. The folded edges were pasted together to form the spine. The shape of the leaves and the manner in which the book opened and closed resembled the wings of a butterfly, therefore the book was given this rather descriptive name. The collections at Dunhuang contain several locally made copies of this format2 and by the Song period (960-1127) most Chinese books were produced in this format. This example contains a copy of the Diamond Sutra (Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitāsūtra). A note at the end reads: 'From the true printed text of the Guo Family in Xichuan.' This shows how printed texts (see cats. 261-266) had already achieved a legitimacy by virtue of their method of making. The note is followed by dhāraṇī and then a colophon, 'Copied by an old man of 83 who pricked his own hand to draw blood on the second day of the second





month of bingyin, the third year of Tianyu' (27 February 906). Using one's own blood as ink was an act of Buddhist merit, although frowned upon by some Chinese scholars who caught in it a whiff of superstitious practice. The old man appears in nine other manuscripts written between 905 and 909.4 FT-Raman Microscopy on the ink has failed to detect blood, but this could reflect that the procedure is not sensitive enough (the blood was most probably mixed with ink for writing and thus might be a very weak solution).

Cat. 259 is an early example of thread or stitched binding (xian zhuang 線裝) which became the predominant Chinese book format late in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), and represents the last phase in the history of traditional Chinese bookbinding. The vast majority of books handed down to us from China's imperial past are in this format. Several sheets of paper were stacked before being folded, and then several of these folded stacks were joined together by being stitched along the spine. The stitched booklet here comprises 24 folios containing two apocryphal sutra, Fo shuo yan shou ming jing (on longevity, first mentioned in 695) and Fo shuo fu mu en zhong jing, followed by prayers and two crude line drawings of a bird.

Neither of these formats was best suited to the development of printing. If the whole sheet was to be printed using a single woodblock prior to binding, then every second page of a butterfly binding would have to be left blank because the sheets were joined at the fold. Stitched gatherings were even less convenient to printing, hence at first butterfly booklets were more common. But then the idea of folding sheets and binding them at the unfolded outer edges was developed. This meant that each sheet could be printed, folded with the blank page inside and bound so that each page of the finished booklet was printed. Instead of being pasted together like butterfly books, the folios were bound together using paper twists that passed through the spine of the book. A cover was then attached to the book, protecting the spine and outer pages. However, the old forms of binding persisted, as seen in cat. 260 which is an 1879 polychrome print bound butterfly style with a wrapped back.

- Although Giles (Catalogue, no. 6968) records 7 folios two of these are actually parts of a folded folio.
- 2 For a fuller discussion of bindings found at Dunhuang and their historical importance, along with images and diagrams, see the IDP bookbinding site (by Colin Chinnery), http://idp.bl.uk/chapters/topics/ BOOKBINDING/CHOOSER-FRAMESET.html
- See http://idp.bl.uk/chapters/topics/BOOKBINDING/ BUTTERFLY-FRAMESET.html for a fuller explanation, diagrams and more examples.
- See Teiser, Ten Kings, 244 for a list. The man was eighty-five in 909.

259 Stitched bound book

10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper 24 folios; H: 9 cm W: 8.5 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.5433 Giles, Catalogue, no. 5461; Wang, Li chen wen, 235-88

260 Wrapped back bound book

Guangxu jimao (1879) Produced by Mr Qiu of Yuanhe based on the original 1644 edition Ink and pigments on paper, multiwoodblock polychrome printing H: 25.4 cm W: 15 cm The British Library, ORB 30/4551

Original compiled and published by Hu Zhengyan (1584-1674) in Nanjing. Twentyeight subsequent editions identified of which this a fine example. Butterfly binding, also used in the original edition, has each sheet gathered at the fold. The 'cover' is wrapped around and pasted along the folds at the 'spine'. The technique is similar in this respect to the 'wrapped back' style of Chinese binding. In most later traditionally bound Chinese books the folded pages are stitched along the outer edges.

The Development of Printing (cats. 261–266)

261 Prints of Buddha

9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper, woodblock print with added colours The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.254 (Ch.00421) Stein, Serindia, 999; Whitfield, Art, 2: 82; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, 81

Stamps of single buddha figures produced an effect similar to the multiple buddha cave ceilings yet their origin, meaning, and function were entirely different. A woodblock of a buddha was dipped in ink and applied to a piece of paper by a Buddhist devotee as part of ritual daily practice (cat. 261). The dates of use are written at intervals next to the stamps; the user most likely recited prayers orally while making the impressions. Buddhist practices of individual worship and monastic policy greatly impacted the technology of woodblock printing. The extensive Buddhist canon matched the importance of the Confucian classics and inspired a massive court-sponsored project to cut woodblocks of the entire canon in the late tenth century. It was Buddhist merit and accrual of good karma, derived from making multiple copies, that gave rise to professional woodblock printing of all sectors in medieval China.





262 Printed dated copy of the Diamond Sutra in Chinese

Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper: woodblock print H: 27 cm W: 499.5 cm The British Library, Or.8210/P.2 (Ch.ciii.0014) Giles, "Dated IV", 1030-1; Conze, "The Frontispiece"; Giles, Catalogue, no. 8083



SEF

263 Printed prayer sheet

947 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper: woodblock print H: 31.5 cm w: 20.4 cm The British Library, Or.8210/P.20

Among the most famous of the items found among the bundles of manuscripts, documents, paintings and assorted textile fragments in Cave 17 at Dunhuang is a copy of the Diamond Sutra (Vajracchedikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra) whose copying was ordered by one Wang Jie. He paid for a fine frontispiece showing the aged disciple, Subhūti, sitting on a mat with his slippers beside him in conversation with Buddha. The text itself is one of the shorter sutras and so fits on to seven panels of paper (including the colophon), each panel being printed using a separate woodblock. The printing is on fine yellow paper (although it has lost much of its colour through water damage and fading at the beginning of the document) and the printing is clear and bold: the product of a mature industry and a fine woodcarver. What makes it so special, apart from its completeness, is that Wang had a note added to the end: 'Reverently made for universal free distribution by Wang Jie on behalf of his two parents on the 15th of the 4th month of the 9th year of Xiantong'. This date, which corresponds to 11 May 868, makes this Dunhuang Diamond Sutra the earliest, dated, printed complete book in the world.1

It is probable that the sutra was not printed in Dunhuang but in Sichuan, the south-west of China where there was a thriving printing industry at this period. It is clearly the product of a mature industry and it is believed that printing was probably invented by the eighth century in China, when someone experimented with carving a woodblock for a page of text rather than simply for stamps of Buddha or name seals. Only a century after Wang Jie ordered the printing of this text – between 972 and 983 – the Sichuan woodcarvers were employed to produce the first large-scale printing project in the world: the Buddhist canon.

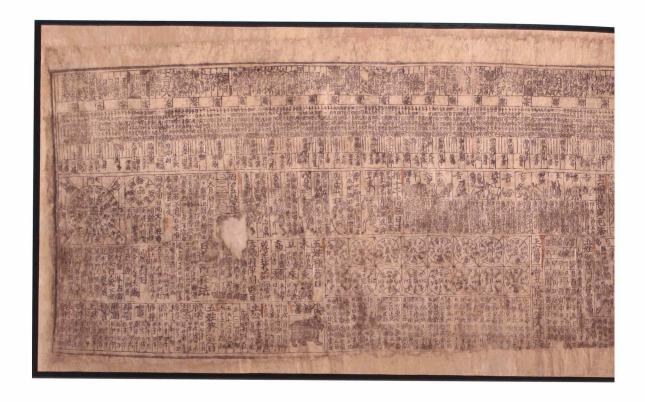
Cat. 263 by contrast was printed at Dunhuang and is one of scores of tenthcentury prayer sheets found in Cave 17, many



of them duplicates and some giving the name of the carver of this woodblock, Lei Yanmei. This one shows a woodcut of Mañjuśrī riding on a lion, with two attendants. Written on the right of the picture is the text, 'The Very Holy Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī', and on the left, 'Universal exhortation of mind and heart to sacrificial worship and maintenance of faith'. Underneath a short prayer and dhāraṇī are given. There were at least two woodblocks used for printing almost identical images but distinguishable because they differ very slightly in size. Several prints exist from these two woodblocks, Or.8210/P.3 (corners torn),

Or.8210/P.5, Or.8210/P.4 (picture and part of text are torn away), Or.8210/P.16 (right-hand part of picture only), and Or.8210/P.15 in the British Library; 1919,0101,0.236 and 237 at the British Museum (Stein site numbers Ch.00151.b. and d), and Pelliot 4514.2, (5) at the Bibliothèque nationale de France. The item photographed in 'Serindia', pl. xcix (Ch. 00151.t.) is none of these, and is probably in the National Museum, New Delhi.

1 Earlier examples of printing, including some fragments with dates, have been found in Japan and Korea.



264 Printed almanac

Stein 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 29 cm W: 115.5 cm The British Library, Or.8210/P.6 (Ch. 91.1.3) Giles, "Dated IV", 1033, pl. 7; Giles, Catalogue, no. 8099; Whitfield, "Censor's Eye", 14, pl. 1

265 Printed almanac

9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper: woodblock print H: 17 cm W: 7 cm The British Library, Or.8210/P.12

Giles, Catalogue, no. 8101; Whitfield, "Censor's Eye", 15, fig. 1

Unlike the Buddhists, private printers were interested in developing the new technology of printing for monetary rather than religious gain. And one of the most popular types of book in China in this period - and up to the present - was the almanac. Although only the emperor's astronomers were entitled by law to calculate the calendar were in reality private almanacs abounded as shown by contemporary evidence such as a memorial issued in 835:

'In the provinces of Sichuan and Huainan, printed almanacs are on sale in the markets. Every year, before the Imperial Observatory has submitted the new calendars for approval and had it officially promulgated, the printed almanacs have flooded the empire. This violates the principle that the calendar is a gift of His Imperial Majesty."

The Chinese state attempted to monopolize production of these texts, not only because they saw a danger in non-official calendars being used to predict unwelcome



events (such as their own downfall) but also because of the loss of revenue from sale of the official version. After the 835 memorial, in what is almost certainly the oldest publication ordinance in the world, the state stipulated that the private printing of almanacs by local administrations and private possession were forbidden.

Cat. 265 is the most complete printed almanac found at Dunhuang and dates from 877 when the prohibition was still in effect. Babylonian, Persian and Indian influences can be seen in its disparate elements (see cat. 264), including the animals zodiac (see cats. 164-5). But traditional Chinese beliefs, such as talismans and fengshui, are also evident. The detail of the print is astonishing and must have involved considerable skills both from the maker of the original paper copy and the woodblock carver who used this copy as a template.

It is not clear where this almanac was printed but a small fragment of another almanac also found in Cave 17 at Dunhuang (cat. 265) and dated by Giles to the ninth century contains the colophon 'Large print of the Dadao Family in the East Market of the Capital'. We know nothing of the Dadao Family printers but contemporary records attest that there were many booksellers in the Chinese capital (Chang'an). The West Market was where the Silk Road merchants brought and traded their goods. The East Market was adjacent to the imperial palace and mansions of high-ranking officials. Thus this almanac was privately printed under the noses of the officials who were meant to be enforcing a ban on such activity. The evidence of this fragment and the reiteration of the ban throughout the tenth century suggests that private printing of almanacs continued, presumably because there was profit to be made.

See Whitfield, "Censor's Eye" and "Almanacs" for a fuller discussion of this with references.



266 Printed forgery

Sold by Islam Akhun to Macartney Ink on paper H: 21 cm W: 15 cm The British Library, Or.13873/2 (Hoernle collection M6)

Stein, Ancient Khotan, 507-14; Sims-Williams, "Forgeries", 121-2

Cat. 266 is an example of a Cyrillic-style blockprint forgery, possibly a fabrication of Islam Akhun's (see cat. 142) colleague Ibrahim Mullah who was credited with some knowledge of Russian and apparently specialised in the Russian market. It was one of four books and miscellaneous antiquities supposedly found in the summer of 1897 that Macartney purchased from the Swedish missionary Högberg. It contains two columns of identical text which are turned the other way up on the facing page (i.e., the verso of the next leaf). This directional arrangement of the text is found in many of the blockprints and may be influenced by the arrangement in pothis, in which, since the pages are turned vertically rather than left to right as in bound codices, it is normal for the text on the verso of each leaf to be written the other way up.



TISW



267 Kneeling Camel

7th century North China Terracotta H: 37 cm L: 34 cm Musée Guimet, MA 6842

Stein at Gaochang and Astana (cat. 268)

Stein excavations in the area of modern Turfan on the Northern Silk Road were unusual in that this was an urban area which, although replete with archaeological sites, had been visited by many before Stein, including German and Japanese expeditions. At the end of his stay he decided to excavate at the cemetery site of Astana although he had heard from locals that most had already been opened and searched. As always he tried to find out as much as he could before starting excavation and he employed Mashik, 'the local tomb expert' who had been initiated into 'this business' by his father and had opened more than a hundred tombs during the last four or five years. It was typical of Stein that he recognized the worth of this man, rather than dismissing him as a tomb robber.

'I was only too glad to employ this intelligent fellow as their foreman; for through long practice in the macabre line of business he not only possessed an uncanny familiarity with all that appertained to these abodes of the dead, their personal outfits, &c., but also a remarkably accurate knowledge as to which tombs had been searched recently for antiques and which had remained untouched but for the unsophisticated exploitation attributed to the Tungans. Considering the very large number of tombs and the importance of economizing time, this knowledge was of obvious value to us and fully worth the rewards which secured that it should be honestly applied' (Stein, Innermost Asia, 644)

Stein stayed for two weeks carrying out careful excavations, although most of the tombs had already been disturbed. The wooden coffins had probably been taken, thought Stein, by the tomb robbing labourers as

compensation for trees were scarce and fuel at a high price. The bodies had been tipped out of the coffins. Stein left them in situ, noting their position on his plans. The tomb contents had been rifled through, items of value taken, and the small figures, clay pots, bundles of paper and rotting shrouds left in disarray.

It might be thought that there was little left for Mashik but, as Stein pointed out with some irony, 'This disappointing experience might well have reduced his exploratory zeal had not a curious discovery of his own, aided by a peculiar freedom from all superstitious scruples where the remains of "dead Kafirs" were concerned, enabled honest Mashik to look for precious metals in places where even greedy Tungans had failed to search for them.' He was alluding to the custom of placing coins in the mouth, often gold and silver drachmas, that Mashik would retrieve by breaking the jawbone of the corpse.

Despite Mashik's assertion that all the tombs had been disturbed, they found one intact (Ast.ix.2) that contained three coffins, one almost 8 feet in length. The record of this is shown in Stein's pocket notebook in which he records that the man inside was 6 feet 1 inch and the epitaph tablet named him as Fan Yanshi who died in 689. The other coffins contained women, one recorded as his wife.

As well as making a careful record in his notebooks and in his letters to his friends, Stein also took photographs of the sites, especially of those monsters that he left in situ (fig. 44) and that are now in local museums.

12.45 8901 hou-lan posite Head of a ged man Kham to may whion with So 2. 1 , opened by Mashin 1914. fixed \$ 12 mil 3 small horses : a up white ramel, I bro dromeary; good house we

268 Stein's pocket notebook for January to February 1915

Ink on paper H: 14 cm W: 6.5 cm D: 6 cm The Bodleian Library, MSS Stein 155/29v-3or



GAOCHANG: DEATH AND THE AFTERLIFE



Fig. 44 Guardian tomb monsters at the Astana graveyard The British Library, Photo 392/28(684)

Walled Cities and Ancient Graves

The Tianshan or Heavenly Mountains rise from north-east of Samarkand in the west and extend eastwards to the Hexi Corridor. Their snowy peaks form a backdrop to travellers choosing one of the northern branches of the Eastern Silk Road, which follow the mountains to their north or south. The few passes through the towering peaks are high and barren until the eastern end. Here the mountains branch to skirt the Tarim Basin which, at 154 m below sea level is the second lowest depression on earth (after the Dead Sea) and the two northern routes join again for the final leg east to China. Further routes lead north to the fertile grazing of the Dzungarian Basin and thence into the grasslands of what is now Mongolia. To the south the route crosses the Gobi to join with the southern route near Dunhuang.

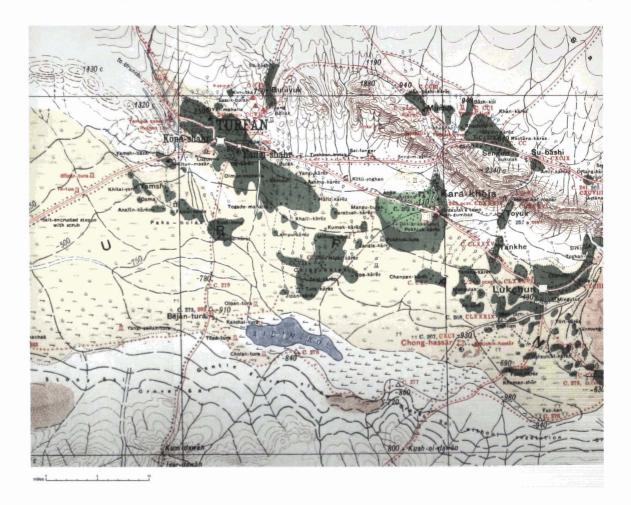
The strategic importance of this area was quickly understood by all the Eastern Silk Road powers and a garrison was established at the

'At midnight he reached the royal city. The gatekeeper reported to the king who ordered him to open the city gate and Xuanzang entered. The king and his attendants, candles in hand, came to receive him and ushered him in to sit behind a curtain in a storeyed pavilion in the inner court.'

Life of Xuanzang, 26

northern edge of the Tarim Basin where the fertile soil and searing heat could take advantage of melt water from the mountains to produce fine crops and make the area famous for its grapes.

In the first millennium the area was occupied by the Jushi, described in the Chinese histories as 'people who live in felt tents, keep moving in



pursuit of water and grass for grazing, and have a fair knowledge of farming.' The Jushi offered allegiance to the Chinese Han court in 60 BC and the Chinese rulers divided their territory and stationed a garrison and military colony there. Until AD 450 the main city was Jiaohe/ Yarkhoto, west of present-day Turfan. At times the Chinese lost control to the Xiongnu and also withdrew when control in central China broke down. In the early fourth century an alternative commandery was established in Gaochang/Karakhoja to the east of present-day Turfan, and this area also fell in and out of Chinese and steppe control over the following centuries.

The two cities were taken in the mid-fifth century by a member of the royal family of the Northern Liang then ruling the Hexi Corridor to the east and they established a single capital at Gaochang. The Juqu family came from the Hexi Corridor area but their rule was short lived; the Rouran (or Juanjuan) nomads from the north took over in 460 and set up a king in Gaochang. They were defeated by another nomadic con-

Such a site as spacious, lonely, silent old Kaochang, crumbling back to dust and wholly undisturbed by the hand of any restorer, has the power to carry the mind back to the days when the town flourished as a thriving centre of culture and civilisation.

Cable and French, The Gobi Desert, 202

federation, the Gaoche (who were probably Turkic) who, in turn, were driven out by a local uprising. The next couple of centuries were not easy for the ruling Qu family who were buffeted between the Rouran and Gaoche and eventually gave their allegiance to the Turks. It was during the Qu family reign that Xuanzang visited on his way to India in 629 and was almost prevented from continuing: the king wishing him to stay as a local Buddhist teacher.

Eleven years later Chinese Tang forces took control and established Gaochang as a sub-prefecture of the prefecture of Xizhou in 640. By this time there was a resident community of Sogdian traders and local peoples who followed their native religions, as well as a large community of Chinese who had brought in Buddhist and Daoist beliefs.

Chinese control was compromised with the withdrawal of their troops following civil war in 755 and in 789 the Tibetans took the Chinese garrison of Beiting or Beshbaliq north of Gaochang. In 803 Gaochang itself was taken by the Uighurs, a powerful confederation of Turkic tribes. Half a century earlier they had established an empire in present-day Mongolia and helped the Chinese to oust the rebels from the Chinese capital. They were exacting a heavy payment from the Chinese in the guise of horse sales and marriage alliances. When in China they had met Sogdian Manichaeans and the Uighur rulers converted to this religion from the west.

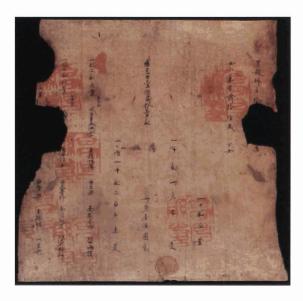
Gaochang, named Kocho by the Uighurs, became the new capital of this area and the home of a large community of Uighurs after 840 when they were driven out of their empire to the north by the Kirghiz. Over the following centuries, like all the ancient Silk Road kingdoms, the area fell under control of various regimes, including the Kara-Khitai from the east in the twelfth century and the Mongols from the north-east in the thirteenth. In the late-fourteenth century the city was moved from Gaochang/Kocho to the present-day site of Turfan. It remained under Mongol control until the Manchu Qing dynasty in China took control in 1756. It is now part of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region.

The area around Turfan has attracted much archaeological interest. Russian expeditions led the way under Klementz (1897), Kokhanovsky (1906-7) and Oldenburg (1909-10). Four German expeditions under Grunwedel and Le Coq visited between 1902-7 and 1913-14 and came away with many finds from these ancient sites, including illuminated Manichaean manuscripts from what was thought to be a Manichaean temple in Kocho (cats. 5-8, 244, 249). The Japanese also mounted four expeditions under Ōtani starting from 1902 and all visited and excavated in this region. Turfan was also visited by the 1906-8 Finnish expedition under Mannerheim and the Sino-Swedish expedition of 1927-35. Stein visited on his third expedition and mapped and excavated many of the tombs at Astana.

Between 1959 and 1975 there have been thirteen Chinese excavations at Astana, uncovering 456 tombs, and removing numerous artefacts and dessicated bodies some of which are now on display at the museums in Turfan and Urumqi. The tombs themselves are now listed as a Historical Monument under Chinese State Protection.

Fig. 45 Map of the area round Turían showing the ancient walled city of Karakhoja (Gaochang/Kocho) and the graveyard of Astana in the early twentieth century as surveyed by Stein, Ram Singh and Lal Singh, during the first three Silk Road expeditions between 1900 and 1915. Chinese Turkestan and Kansu, Serial No. 12,

1:500,000, Survey of India 1918 (for key see p. 134)



269 Census of people and land for Gaochang

7th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 28 cm W: 29 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.4682 Giles, Catalogue, no.7874; TTD 2, A: 61-2; B: 99; Tang and Lu, Shehui, 488; Yingzang 6: 234.

Once Gaochang came under Chinese control in 640 a Chinese administration was implemented and one of their first acts would have been the taking of a census to measure the population of their new territory. The census fragment for Gaochang shown in cat. 269 probably dates from this time and contains six impressions of the official seal ('Seal of Gaochang Xian').



270 Official report on the situation in North China

884 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 27 cm w: 60 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.2589 Giles, "Dated IV", 1037-8; Giles, Catalogue, no. 7507A

By the ninth century Gaochang - now known as Kocho - was under control of the Turkic Uighurs who had moved here when their empire to the north fell to the Kirghiz. Over the next century they also moved into the region around Dunhuang and to Ganzhou, further east. The Chinese loyalist regime of Dunhuang was increasingly isolated, especially after 881 when the Chinese capital was taken by the rebel, Huang Chao (see cat. 188). Just as they had done in the mid-eighth century, the Chinese turned attention away from the Silk Road to deal with rebels at home. The practice of local Chinese administrators submitting reports to the court continued, however, as seen in cat. 270, a report from officials at Suzhou (near Dunhuang). After announcing the rebel's capture by Shang Rang, the report turns to local affairs:

'The negotiations between Ganzhou and the Uighurs were not yet settled, and two hundred Uighurs who were constantly in the vicinity of Ganzhou took control of the roads and plundered (there), (so that) nobody came from or went to Ganzhou from the time that the barbarians arrived until after they left. Bo Yongji, Song Runying and Yin Qinger each provided an account, we have sealed them all together into a roll, and these special messengers, your vigorous and honest slaves, hasten to report and send notification, and respectfully we say that everything is as stated above, and respectfully set down in the report. Official document set down as before, respectfully certified. Reported on the first day of the 11th month (22 November) of the 4th year of Zhonghe (884), by Kang Mojun, Chief Agricultural Commissioner in the garrison of Suzhou, and by Zhang Shengjun, Assistant County Magistrate.'1

1 Thanks to Naomi Standen for the translation.

271 Princes' mission to Ganzhou

Late 9th or 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 930 cm W: 25 cm The British Library, IOL Khot S 131 (Ch.00269) Stein, Serindia, 1451; Skjærvø, Khotanese, 508-14: Kumamoto, "Two Khotanese Fragments

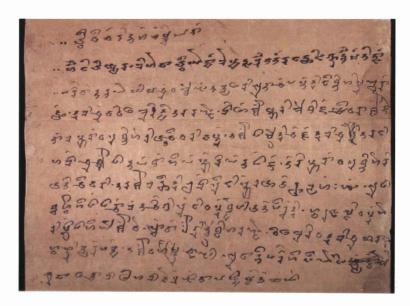
The section of the Khotanese scroll shown in cat. 271 is a copy of the report by seven Khotanese princes to the Court of Khotan from Dunhuang, while en route on a mission to Ganzhou:

'We make a report to the court. The seven princes, we went out in front of the royal sight (saying) "we are going to guttausanä." The order was for us "do not stay long in Shazhou." (Dunhuang) When we gave Capastaka a report for you, till now he has not yet directed (us) to Ganzhou. All the animals our men had are lost. Our clothes are lost. ... there is no one with whom we can get out (and go to?) Ganzhou. And the animals Ttaya-śām had, they were since lost. There is nothing any more for the

horses, nor any clothes. Neither Chikä the prramā m nor Duthe puye has any animals. How (can) we then come to Shuofang, since we have neither gift nor letter for the Chinese king? Things for food and drink ... Till now there in Ganzhou many men have died. We have no food. How were then an order to come? How can we have to enter a fire (from which) we can not bring ourselves back!'

USW

1 Scroll recto is a copy of the Lankavatarasūtra in Chinese. See Enoki, Appendix, 252-3 (C61)



272 Envoys and orders

Late 9th or 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 240 cm W: 31 cm The British Library, IOL Khot S. 61 (Ch.0048) Stein, Serindia, 1449; Skjærvø, Khotanese, 485

Copy of a report detailing work and procedures for Samgalakā (see cat. 271) and other envoys in Dunhuang on their way to Ganzhou and Shuofang:

'When they set out here in the (Golden) Land (to go) to you, there were three kinds of envoys. In the hand of each and every one (were) yellow orders. Under each and every red coat the envoys wear a ... on the shoulder. Wherever they dismount, if there is no tree there, there he must tie on a ... and place the orders on top of it. And they rise very early. ... The first horse must be employed(?) for the orders. They must watch until the order-bearer mounts'

The first four lines of this long document, dated in the year of the sheep, relate how an envoy Panakā took a Chinese woman: '...I make (her) my wife. The wife belonging to the house I expel.'

1 Scroll recto is a copy of the Aparimitāyuli-sūtra in Chinese. See Enoki, Appendix, 253(C62).

273 Report to the court in Khotanese

Second half of the 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 160 cm W: 23 cm The British Library, Or.8212/1861 Skjærvø, Khotanese, 508-14; Kumamoto, Khotanese Official Documents, text II

Cats. 271-73, all copies, possibly writing exercises using official reports and written on the back of Chinese Buddhist sutras, describe the turbulent state of affairs in Shazhou (Dunhuang), Ganzhou (to the east), and the territory in between. Kumamoto, on the basis of identifying and dating certain individuals mentioned in a group of related documents, has suggested a late ninth-century date for cats. 271 and 2722, while cat. 273, he suggests, can be dated to around 966.3

Cat. 271 is one of a group of reports concerning a diplomatic mission between the court of Khotan and the Uighur kaghan of Ganzhou, Letters from envoys in Dunhuang to Khotan (P.2786 and Or.8212/162), from the envoy Thyai Paḍä-tsā (P. 2741) and from the kaghan of Ganzhou to Khotan (P.2958) give different versions of the same events, and IOL Khot S. 13 contains a letter from the guides who were appointed to lead the royal delegates, seven Khotanese princes, from Dunhuang to Ganzhou. The final section (cat. 271) is a copy of a letter from the seven princes themselves.



Unfortunately many passages are obscure, but the report includes passing references to the murder of the kaghan of Ganzhou and a child being placed on the throne. The roads were considered unsafe and there was no food available. Many different conflicting groups are mentioned: Uighurs (hvaihū:ra), Turks (ttūrkä), the Cimūda, and the dūms (the Longjia or 'dragon clan').

'As for the buduns in Ganzhou, they are now three factions. As for the Ttūdīśa and Ttūrkä Bayarkāva and Hāttäbara and Īcä Īmjūva, they are seated at Yīpākīnā Ttahā: and Bedā-Darūkā. All the Uighurs are seated at Karattahä: and Karattaha. As for the dums and robbers(?) and merchants(?), they (are) in the city. As those three factions now all do not agree together, no envoy can enter Ganzhou at all."

すの言言にそれ 人間によいますのま

וולשבנים בונגל לים בים בינים בינים לבניתנה

1 Scroll recto (Giles, Catalogue, no. 8049) is chapter 154 of the Mahapraiñaparamita-sutra in Chinese.

- 2 Kumamoto, "Two Khotanese Fragments", 103 and "The Khotanese in Dunhuang", 86. It is possible, however, as P. O. Skjærvø is inclined to think (personal communication), that these reports are contemporaneous with cat. 273 and date from the second half of the tenth century
- Kumamoto, Khotanese Official Documents, 51, suggests a date around 966 for a group of related documents of which this report is one.

Buddhist and Manichaean Banners: A Comparative Study (cats. 274–276)



274 Avalokiteśvara banner fragment

9th to 10th century Sengim Temple Cotton

H: 44 cm W: 23.3 cm H: 18.5 cm W: 32 cm Museum für Indische Kunst, SMPK, Berlin: III 521 & 6963

Le Coq, Chotscho, Taf 41c; Bhattacharya-Haesner, Temple Banners, no. 180



275 Banner fragment

9th to 10th century Kocho, Ruin K Pigments on silk H: 3 cm W: 4.2 cm Museum für Indische Kunst, SMPK, Berlin: III 6272 Bhattacharya-Haesner, Temple Banners,

276 Manichaean banner fragment

oth to 10th century Kocho, Ruin K Silk with gold-plated paper stripes H: 35 cm W: 20 cm Museum für Indische Kunst, SMPK, Berlin: III 6251

Le Coq, Chotscho, Taf 6e; Klimkeit, Manichaean Art, fig. 47a; Gulácsi, Manichaean Art 89, ; Bhattacharya-Haesner, Temple Banners, no. 547

Banner types mentioned here1

Banner types

banner with streamers (sapatākā) B

triangular head, body, arm and legs B II:2

B II:2:1 devotional

B II:2:2 memorial

like B II:2 and a variant thereof; B II:4 Manichaean

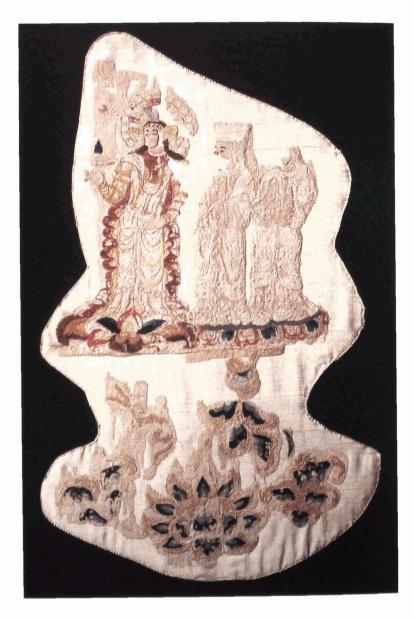
patacitra or pichavăi type, but with B III:1 streamers; Manichaean

B III:2 Type C III, but with streamers

patacitra or pichavāi type, hanging. CIII

Among the 794 banners found between 1902 and 1914 in the course of four German expeditions to Central Asia, forty-four are Manichaean, dated to the ninth and tenth centuries AD, all others are Buddhist. Buddhist banners already existed when Faxian travelled through Central Asia on his way to India (399-414), as he mentions them although without elaborating on their shapes. Only five of the Berlin banners were almost complete: MIK III 4614, MIK III 6283, MIK III 6286 and the banner, lost in the Second World War, probably MIK III 6285, (henceforth WW banner). Between the eighth and the fourteenth centuries, the shape of banners went through at least four phases of development. Uighur Manichaean banners belong to the second phase.

Although the shape of Manichaean banners is similar to that of Buddhist banners they present a departure from convention. The narrow body and head, or Type BII:4; the anthropomorphic, or Type BII:2; and the



adding of bottom-streamers to the rectangular bodies of patacitra and pichavāi (or Type BIII:2) are such examples. And, several additional features make them distinct.

Manichaean banners MIK III 6283 and 6286 are damaged and it is difficult to tell the overall shape. The extant portions are clearly a mixture of Types BII:2:2 and BIII:2. They are similar to Buddhist banners as far as the body, the bottom-streamers, or legs, and the band of vandyked valances between the body and extant head, signifying the canopy, are concerned. The portion above the stylised valances of the canopy shows straight edges, suggesting that the top of the head had the same width as the body.

There is, however, no indication or marking on these two of a triangular head or headpiece as in many Buddhist banners (cats. 236, 237). The sides of both banners would have been carefully rolled and sewn with overcasting stitches and the flat tops probably had at least three loops to insert a crossbar for suspension. Side-streamers were either tied to the crossbar, or sewn to its ends, probably as decoration.

With the square or rectangular, rather than triangular, head, the overall shape of these Manichaean banners was rectangular, like a pațacitra or pichavăi type. But the WW banner shows that some Manichaean banners were shaped like Buddhist banners of the anthropomorphic type, with a triangular head.

Buddhist, and Manichaean memorial banners, including the WW banner, show portraits of deceased dignitaries and monks, along with other important personalities and donors in Uighur dress. The deceased are portrayed either as followers of Mani or Buddha. Buddhist and Manichaean memorial banners have the same function and show the same subject-matter; the fact that they are found only in Turfan from a certain period suggests that they reflect a local Uighur custom.

Banners MIK III 6283 and MIK III 6286 depict Manichaean male and female elects, or priests with a laywoman, and thus may be called Manichaean memorial banners. According to the inscription, the elects portrayed here are important persons; the one in MIK III 6286 is identified as Princess Basun. Portraits were made after death to offer as donations and to pray for the peace of the

deceased's soul. The deceased holds a 'holy book', instead of a flower with a long stalk, as seen in Buddhist memorial banners.

The banner depicted on a paper scroll from Kocho, MIK III 4614 has a low triangular top carried on a heavy crossbar. It recalls a Tibetan thangka. It is crowned by a typical Manichaean priest's high cap, ornamented with a black feather, which in turn is flanked with flaming jewels. It apparently symbolises Mani, and instead of the image of a deity in the middle of the banner, its body carries an inscription in Sogdian referring to 'the možak', the head of the Uighur Manichaean church.

This is apparently a memorial banner, dedicated to the možak. Streamers, tied into bows, hang from either end of the crossbar. The terminal parts hang symmetrically in a meandering form and are held by two bodhisattvas with armoured chests. At first it seems the bottom-streamers were lost when the lower portion of the banner was damaged but, judging from the levels of the extant lower portion of the banner and the lotus pedestal of the two figures standing on either side, it is clear that the banner is complete, leaving no space for bottom-streamers.

This painting, perhaps the only extant one of its kind, is important for two reasons. Firstly, it delineates the shape of the head and body of a Manichaean banner. Such a head is not found on Buddhist anthropomorphic banners. Second, it is interesting to observe that the bodhisattvas hold the streamers of the banner in honour of Mani. This again is an element not seen in Buddhist banners. This may be interpreted in two ways: either that Buddhism is degraded by the Manichaeans, and the bodhisattvas are represented as attendants, or that both Buddhism and Manichaeism coexisted in Turfan just as Buddhism and Hinduism once did in India and that just as the Hindu gods Indra and Brahma were taken into the Buddhist pantheon as attendants of Buddha so bodhisattvas became Mani's attendants in Manichaean art.

With relatively few extant Manichaean banners, it is still possible to find elements, such as forms and themes, that they share with Buddhist banners. The image, flanked by elects, on the rectangular heads of some banners is apparently Mani, sitting on a throne in western fashion. He is delineated like the

transcendental Buddha Amitābha shown on the heads of Buddhist banners from Central Asia, such as cat. 274. Since this figure, adored by elects on either side, is portrayed above the elect in the body of the banner, he can only be identified as Mani. The heads of Buddhist banners sometimes depict a lotus to symbolise Buddha Amitābha. The same is observed in Manichaean banners, where the priest's high cap represents Mani.

The other example of assimilating Buddhist ideas while illustrating Mani's concept of Light is reflected in cat. 276, an embroidered banner fragment. The lady standing on a flamboyant lotus has an aureole embroidered with multicoloured rays signifying Light. The object in her hand could be a flaming jewel, a lamp, an incense burner or a lotus. Together with these special features, a crescent in vertical position near her aureole suggests she is a deity. She is identified as 'the Virgin of Light releasing the Living Soul to Heaven." The two female elects, following this deity, represent the living souls who are led to heaven. This composition is very similar to those illustrating bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāma-prāpta leading the newborn soul to the Paradise of Amitabha (cats. 178 & 296).

Another Manichaean banner fragment, showing heads in a golden bowl, cat. 275, may be mentioned in this connection. It recalls the Buddhist story of faithful Amara. In the Buddhist treatment the heads depict those with bad intentions, while in the Manichaean illustration the heads in the dish could be a reference to food, which 'may be interpreted to personify the presence of light in food offerings.12 In these cases, the presentation is similar, but thematically contrary. The artists borrowed ideas, elements and styles but, to serve the new religion and to suit local taste and traditions, blended them with their own imagination.

CBH

Gulácsi, Manichaean Art, 194.

Uighur Influence on Dunhuang Art



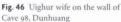




Fig. 47 Uighur ruler on the wall of Cave 409, Dunhuang

Tenth-century Dunhuang art has been traditionally regarded as provincial and lacking in quality in contrast to the art of the Chinese Tang period (618–907), that had closely reflected the influence of imperial Chinese art. This view has already been questioned but there has been no systematic study of the importance of non-Chinese influences on this late period of Dunhuang art. A study of portable Dunhuang paintings made possible the identification of several groups of paintings reflecting various stages of increasing Uighur influence.²

The Uighur wall paintings from Shorchuk (fig. 28, p. 214)³ come from a position low on the rear wall of the rear chamber of a temple, and were painted with few colours in a sketchy style compared to the larger sections today in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, that probably came from the front hall of the main cell. In the first scene young monks are receiving instructions from a more senior monk seated on a stool. In the second scene a monk is shown in a cave writing with a pen. The use of a pen was characteristic of Uighur writing and drawing. Probably as a result of this the quality of their painted lines was also distinctive: mostly kept as thin, even lines, they show no change in thickness like in the Chinese calligraphic style. Faces were round and eyes painted with a few thin lines as very narrow and almond shaped. Noses are shown from the profile even in three-quarter view as a continuous thin line

with a curve for a nostril. The mouths are small, rounded and painted in red outlined in black.

By the tenth century the Ganzhou branch of the Uighurs (closely related to those in Kocho) secured their position along the Hexi Corridor east of Dunhuang, and could cut off trade routes leading to Central China at will. This led to inter-marriage between the kaghan's family and the ruling family of Dunhuang. Paintings of the Uighur wives and their attendants were placed in prominent positions in the caves wearing their full headdress and clothing: a proud display of their non-Chinese origin. In Cave 98 the Uighur wife of Cao Yijin, recognisable by her waterdrop shaped head ornaments, leads the

procession, followed by Cao's Chinese wives (fig. 46).

By the eleventh century Dunhuang caves were openly dedicated by non-Chinese Uighurs, who had them decorated in Uighur style. In Cave 409 on the two sides of the entrance we can see a Uighur ruler under a parasol held by an attendant and two aristocratic females, who resemble closely the Uighur patrons of Bezeklik (fig. 47).

The colouring of the Thousand-armed Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara (cat. 124) is unusual: reds and oranges dominate on the blue background. The bodhisattvas' eyebrows almost touch each other in the middle, their noses are straight, the eyes are very narrow, the mouths small, painted in red (fig. 48). The additional heads of deities appear not in profile, but as little additional heads in threequarter view. These features became characteristic of Uighur art. The lokapāla (cat. 106), fully clothed in armour, may be another representative of this transitional phase of mutual influence between the workshops of Dunhuang and Turfan in the ninth century.

Until recently the Amitābha's Paradise (fig. 49) was in a completely fragmented state, with many parts being only a few centimetres in size. The fragments were finally reassembled in 2002. The layout follows the traditional compositions showing Amitābha's Pure Land in Dunhuang, but the colouring and stylistic details are comparable to Uighur Manichaean art, such as the faces in the side scenes or the plant scroll surrounding the entire composition. A few colours dominate: on a blue background shades of green, blue and red. For larger objects gold leaves were applied as approximate shapes then outlined in black for finer details like on Manichaean illuminated manuscripts.4

Other details point to the influence of Uighur Buddhist art. The Chinese buildings in the side scenes are decorated in an exaggerated way comparable to those shown in the pranidhi scenes of Bezeklik Cave 20. Haloes made up of brightly coloured geometric patterns swirling in one direction or radiating from the centre are also commonly used in Bezeklik and are atypical in Dunhuang. The edges of the Buddha's robes are highlighted with very thin golden lines, a feature found on fragments from Turfan.5 Queen Vaidehi in the side scenes wears a bright red gown decorated



Fig. 48 Detail of cat. 124 showing Avalokiteśvara's face



with green dots. This is a simplified version of the female gowns shown in Bezeklik Cave 20. Her hairline is straight and may indicate shaving - fashionable for Uighur ladies. In view of these links to Bezeklik the dating needs to be revised from the eighth to the tenth century.

In mature Uighur art the linear design and flat appearance as well as unrealistic decorative details dominated.6 Comparable to this Uighur figure is Virūpākṣa (fig. 50). The Guardian King tramples on a demon, and a cloud rises behind him. This format is well known from Dunhuang, and this is sufficient evidence for local manufacture. However, the way the figure fills the entire available space, his pink face colour, the red outlining used for the face and hands, the decorative patterns of the armour and the very bright colours give this painting a two-dimensional quality, uncharacteristic in Dunhuang.

Virūpākṣa's armour, his leg-coverings and shoes, and the decorative treatment of the sashes can also be compared to Bezeklik murals.7 His loosely brushed back hair falls freely on the shoulders. This is not usual in Dunhuang. These features make Uighur patronage and a revised tenth-century date likely.

LRS



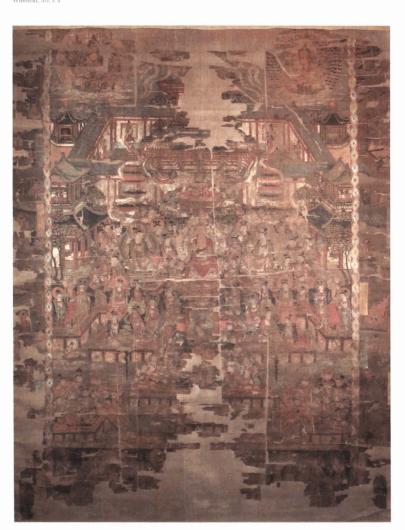
Fig. 50 Virūpākṣa, Guardian King of the West, portrayed on a banner found in Cave 17 at Dunhuang. The British Museum, 1919,0101, 0.18

- 1 Giès, "The Pictorial Language", 17-37.
- 2 Russell-Smith: Uighur Patronage.
- Gulácsi, "Mediaeval Manichaean Book Art", 131.
- E.g. MIK III 4534c, Berlin: Museum für Indische Kunst.
- 5 MIK III 6875, Berlin: Museum für Indische Kunst.
- 6 TC 554, National Museum, Tokyo. Published in Giès and Cohen, Sérinde, no. 147.
- Bodleian MSS Stein 290/9.
- 8 Stein, Sand-Buried Ruins, 273.

Illness and Plague (cats. 277-280)

277 Paradise of Bhaisajyaguru

9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 H; 206 cm w; 167 cm Ink and colours on silk The British Museum, 1919,0101, 0.36 (Ch.lii.003) Stein, Serindia; Waley, Paintings, 36; Whitfield, Art, 1: 9



278 Appeal to Rāhu

10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and colours on paper H: 30 cm W: 13cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.5666 Giles, Catalogue, no. 6264



279 Plague in the city

Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper н: 28 cm w: 84.3 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S1604 Giles, Catalogue, no. 7380

280 Remedies for illnesses

7th or 8th century Acquired from Badruddin c. 1904 Ink on paper H: 4.5 cm W: 21 cm The British Library, IOL Khot 159/8 (Hoernle collection H. 143 NS 63) Skjærvø, Khotanese, 357





Bhaisajyaguru was the buddha of healing and is shown in cat. 277 in his paradise in the east. His image is not common in India or southeast Asia, but he became popular in Tibet and China, and in Japan from the twelfth century. The paradise follows that of Amitābha's in the west, with its inclusion of four deities from the esoteric pantheon. It is similar to the several eastern paradise scenes on the walls of the Dunhuang and Yulin caves (to the east of Dunhuang).

Whereas cat. 277 is a very large votive banner dedicated to a buddha and intended for public display and worship, cat. 278 is a more private appeal. This rough sheet of paper contains a crudely painted image of the astral deity Rāhu, the descending god of the eclipse, with a prayer from a woman of sixtyfour begging his favour and protection against illness and misfortunes that come 'as quickly as Luling' (an attendant on the god of lightning).

Cat. 279 reveals the collaboration of the Buddhist and secular authorities in trying to combat the threat of plague. It is a letter from the Jiedushi of Dunhuang, Zhang Chengfeng, dated 902 to the Buddhist Bishop of Hexi alerting him to the presence of plague and asking for religious rites. The governor has

added three impressions of his official seal and a signature (reading 'Commissioner'). The manuscript contains the Bishop's reply which promises a continuous service of confession and prayer and a nightly recitation of Fomingjing (Names of the Buddha, see cats. 234, 235). The bishop also adds three impressions of his seal, slightly smaller in size.

Cat. 280 is a Khotanese manuscript containing recipes for traditional cures using herbs and less savoury ingredients.

- '... dies. Fourteen times the water ... and with that water ... that ...
- ... It removes it. ... As for the pain which is in the belly-cow's urine should be boiled three ...
- ... should be digested. It removes it. When the urine is blocked, sesame(?) ...
- ... should be mixed, and there it should be increased(?). He will be cured. And ...
- ... it should be cooked in sesame oil, it should be brought to a boil nine times. ...
- ... it becomes ... the thread should be made so long as it is possible(?). ...
- ... it should be smeared on separate from them. It removes it. Forty times ...
- ... should be given (him), and he will have no ... of (his) speech. As for the ...'

Funeral Arrangements (cats. 281–282)



281 Funeral feast

9th to 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper н: 30 cm w: 28 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.2242 Giles, Catalogue, no. 7611



282 Grave siting and diagram

9th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 27 cm W: 47 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.2263 Giles, Catalogue, no. 6970

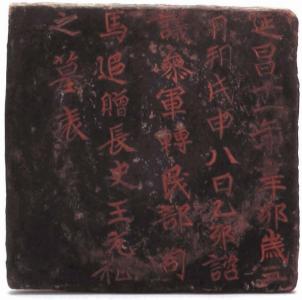
Funerals along the Silk Road reflected the diversity of peoples and their beliefs, from Zoroastrian rituals shown on cat. 1 to Chinese burial. All required money to pay for the priests of the various religions to hold the appropriate ceremonies, including masses, prayers and a funeral feast. Some chose to join a funeral club whereby they would make donations throughout their life to a funeral fund that would be used for a 'proper sendoff' of the club's members. Cat.281 is a circular from such a club calling its members to a funeral feast, presumably of a former member, now deceased, and asking for their contributions of wine and woollen cloth.

The funeral feast was part of a Buddhist ceremony, probably held at the monastery and officiated by monks who read a mass and offered prayers for the dead. In many cases the deceased's relatives also paid for the copying of sutras (cat. 262). However, traditional beliefs continued alongside the Buddhist ones, notably geomantic ideas that dictated the positioning of everything from palaces to tombs. In early times it was propitious to place a grave facing south - like the emperor under a grave mound. By the Tang period, it

became the preference to dig the tomb out of the south side of a mountain, a position seen in the many Tang imperial tombs around the ancient capital of Chang'an (Xian) and still favoured today.

There are large gravesites throughout the Eastern Silk Road, the earliest dating back to the second or third millennium (the so-called Mummies of Urumqi). The plain between the old city of Dunhuang and the Mogao Caves was used as a graveyard from the fourth century but one of the largest and most excavated sites is that north of Gaochang in Turfan. Cat. 282 is a geomantic treatise dealing with the positioning of graves and illustrated with diagrams. The verso of the manuscript contains several texts, including one entitled 'Zhanglu's ('Notes on Sepulture') composed by Zhang Zhongxian.

A Tomb at Astana (cats. 283-294)



283 Astana epitaph tablet

571 Stein, 3rd expedition: Astana Clay with inscribed and painted characters H: 38.5 cm W: 40.0 cm The British Museum, 1928,1022.202 (Ast.og) Stein, Innermost Asia, 710, 983; Whitfield, Art, 3: 90

284 Guardian animal

600-800 Excavated in 1972 from Astana, tomb 216 Clay with pigments H: 108 cm Xinjiang Museum, 72TAM216 Tianshan, 330



285 Wooden jar

6th century Stein, 3rd expedition: Astana Wood with pigments н: 11.2 cm Diameter of mouth: 10.3 cm The British Museum, 1928,1022.105 (Ast.ix.2.028) Stein, Innermost Asia, 707; Whitfield, Art, 3: fig. 120

286 Clay pedestal bowl

6th century Stein, 3rd expedition: Astana Clay with pigments н: 16.7 cm Diameter of mouth: 11.5 cm; of foot: 10.2 cm The British Museum, 1928.1022.110(Ast.i.1.05) Stein, Innermost Asia, 645, pl. 90; Whitfield, Art, 3: 88

287 Pastries

Mid 8th century Stein, 3rd expedition: Astana Flour and water 124- H: 4.7 cm; 128- H: 6 cm; 132- H: 5.2 cm; The British Museum, 1928,1022.124, 128, 132 (Ast.iii.1.024; Ast. iii. 2.034; Ast.iii.2.042) Stein, Innermost Asia, 651, 653, 688, 691, pl.92; Whitfield, Art, 3: 94; Whitfield and Farrer: Caves, no.145









Even as Buddhism started influencing beliefs along the Silk Road and into China the Chinese retained their traditional beliefs in a world after death that resembled the Chinese world before death and for which, therefore, the dead needed to be prepared with goods and money. The tombs at Astana, the cemetery north of Gaochang, reflect this.

That there was from early times a large Chinese community in Karakhoja/Gaochang is shown by the fifth- and sixth-century burials at Astana, predating the Chinese conquest of 640. The epitaph tablets, manuscripts and customs are all Chinese. Cat. 283 shown here is a tablet in clay that would have originally been placed at the entrance to the tomb. It is dated to 571 and reads:

'8th day, yimao, of the third month, beginning moushen, in the 11th year of Yanchang, xinmao, epitaph of the Administrative Counsellor, later

Superior Administrator in the Board of Population, Wang Yuanzhi, posthumously entitled Senior Secretary.'1

The tombs consisted of sloping passageways leading down from 4 to 5 metres ending in a rock cut entrance, about a metre wide and over a metre high, then dropped down by a step into a brick lined chamber, square or oblong and measuring between two to almost four metres wide, three to four metres long and up to two metres high. Some tombs included one or two narrow antechambers in which there were niches on either side for guardian animals, such as shown in cat. 284 (see also fig. 48). The figures show a variety of animal features, some with human faces, and were vividly painted. In their exuberance they resemble the clay statues of Guardian Kings similarly found at the entrance to Buddhist temples.

288 Brocade shoes with rolled toe-caps

600–800 Excavated in 1968 from Astana, tomb 381 Silk brocade L: 29.7 cm w: 8.8 cm H: 8.3 cm Xinjiang Museum, 68TAM381

289a-b Ducks

Early 7th century
Stein, 3rd expedition: Astana
Wood with pigments
L: 14.4 and 15 cm
The British Museum,
1928,1022.94 (Ast.i.1.012)
95 (Ast.i3.021)
Stein, Innermost Asia; Whitfield, Art, 3: 89

290 Figure of man

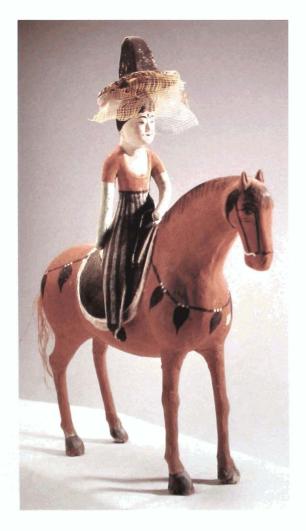
600–800 Stein, 3rd expedition: Astana Wood, clay, paper and grass fibre with ink and pigments H: 51 cm National Museum, New Delhi, 2003/6/1506 (Ast.iii.2.010) Stein, Innermost Asia, 689, pl. 52

291 Figure of man

600–800 Stein, 3rd expedition: Astana Wood, clay and bast fibres with ink and pigments H: 51 cm National Museum, New Delhi, 2003/6/1507 (Ast.iii.4.073) Stein, Innermost Asia, 696, pl. 52









292a-e Labouring women

600-800 Excavated in 1972 from Astana, tomb 201 Clay with pigments H: 9.7 - 16 cm Xiniiang Museum, 72TAM201: 16, 17, 18, 19, 41 Tianshan, 194

293 Horsewoman with veil

600-800 Excavated in 1972 from Astana, tomb 187 Clay with pigments, wood, silk and hemp H: 46 CTD Xinjiang Museum, 72TAM187 Tianshan, 106

294 Funerary banner showing Fuxi and Nuwa

c.667 Stein, 3rd expedition: Astana Pigments on silk H: 235 cm W: 106 cm National Museum, New Delhi, 2003/17/347 (Ast.ix.2.054) Stein, Innermost Asia, 666, 707-8, pl. 109: Whitfield, Art. v. 124

The body or bodies were shrouded in textiles. A silver oval shaped mask covered the eyes and an oval piece of silk was placed over the face. Sometimes coins were used instead of these eye masks, believed to be a Parthian custom. The origin of placing a coin inside the mouth is unclear; Stein saw parallels with the Greek custom of providing the deceased with the fare for the ferryman of Hades, but Chinese scholars have argued the same custom is seen in Chinese burials from the first millennium BC.3 The coins included Byzantium, locally minted replica Byzantium, other locally minted replica Chinese coins and Chinese coins (see cat. 37a).

The bodies were originally placed inside wooden coffins, propped up with bundles of paper, and with small articles of personal use and model garments made of paper or silk, such as shoes, cuffs and hats placed alongside them. Other offerings were put in wooden or pottery vessels near the head of the coffins on a wooden pedestal. The vessels were almost always shallow showing their use for funerary purposes and were often painted with a distinctive pattern of white dots and red lines (cats. 285-6). Remains of food, dried but identifiable, were found in some of the unrobbed tombs and included grapes, plums, pears pieces of meat, and wheat. One tomb contained well preserved pastries, including a jam tart, and in a variety of shapes including buns, straws and twists (cats. 287).

The tomb inventories buried with the dead list many valuable items like hairpins, rabbit hair, silk and gold. The figures mentioned were often clearly fictitious - 99,999 pounds of cotton being a clear example but in any case most valuables such as these had been looted before the tombs were excavated. Some articles of clothing listed in the inventory have been found, such as the exuberant brocade shoes with rolled toes shown in cat. 288, but in many other cases miniature models substituted for the real thing. So, in one tomb, over sixty miniature bolts of silk were used and, in another, a miniature crossbow (thought to ward off tomb robbers). Numerous models of animals for food, such as ducks (cats. 289a&b), and of human figurines have survived. These 'substitute people' could either stand in or serve the dead in the underworld and are ingeniously constructed with clay bodies over a wooden core, sometimes with arms made of a paper core and wooden legs (cats. 290, 291). Some, such as the group of working women (cats. 292a-e), give an interesting insight into daily

life of the period and others, such as the horsewoman (cat. 293), show contemporary fashions. Her hat with veil is particularly interesting as there was a Chinese decree in 700 banning the wearing of veils. However, they seem to have come back into fashion after the reign of Empress Wu Zetian (r.695-710).

Cat. 294 is a funerary banner typical of those found in the Astana tombs, either hung on the wall above the body or as a coffin cover. It depicts Fuxi and Nuwa, mythical forbears of the Chinese. Fuxi is the first of five legendary emperors, believed to have lived at the start of the third millennium nc. He is credited with teaching the ancient Chinese how to hunt, fish and domesticate animals, and then to cook them, as well as making stringed musical instruments, calculating the calendar and the construction of the Eight Diagrams used in the Book of Changes for divination. His consort or sister (both relationships are found in Chinese texts), Nuwa, is credited with preventing a great flood, directing the source of rivers, creating jade and re-erecting one of the four pillars believed to hold up the earth.

In traditional Chinese cosmology the earth was square and the heavens round and thus Fuxi holds a set square to draw the former, and Nuwa a pair of compasses to draw the circle of the earth. The sun is between them, the moon at the bottom and constellations down both sides, including one to the right recognizable as the Great Bear.

¹ Translation after Maspero. For more epitaph tablets see Whitfield, Art, figs. 114-6 and Wenwu, 1975/7).

² Tomb 206 in fact contained a Buddhist style lokapāla trampling a demon (see Tianshan, 324). Hansen, "Path of Buddhism" discusses the influence of Buddhism on Astana.

See Skaff, "Silver Coins from Turfan", 69, fn. 10 for a discussion and bibliography.

⁴ See Hansen, "Path of Buddhism", 45-6; Uyeno, "Some Painted Pieces of Paper".

The Afterlife (cats. 295–98)

295 Tang emperor's visit to the underworld

c.907 Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink on paper H: 23.5 cm W: 242 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.2630 Giles, Catalogue, no. 6686

296 Ksitigarbha and the Ten Kings

Mid-10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and colours on silk н: 91 ст w: 65.5 ст The British Museum, 1919,0101,0.23 (Ch.lxi.009) Stein, Serindia, 169, 866, 943, 1422; Waley, Paintings, no. 23; Whitfield, Art, 2: 24, fig. 33, 34; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, no. 20; Teiser, Ten Kings, 38, 231







297 Sutra of the Ten Kings

10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and pigments on paper H: 29 cm w: 491 cm The British Library, Or.8210/S.3961 Giles, Catalogue, no. 5456; Whitfield, Art, 2:64; Teiser, Ten Kings 32n.3, 196, 228, 240, 272

298 Avalokiteśvara as Guide of Souls

Early 10th century Stein, 2nd expedition: Dunhuang, Cave 17 Ink and colours on silk н: 84.8 ст w: 54.7 ст The British Museum, 1919, 0101, 0.46 (Ch.lvii.003) Stein, Serindia, 867, 1082; Waley, Paintings, no.156; Whitfield, Art, 2:10; Whitfield and Farrer, Caves, no. 15



In pre-Buddhist Chinese beliefs the underworld had existed as a parallel place to earth, with its own bureaucracy and the need for the 'dead' to have money and influence to prosper. These beliefs are frequently the theme of popular short stories from the Tang period (618–907) when the living sometimes found themselves accidentally in the world of the dead, and then came back to report on their experiences. Cat. 295 is one such story relating the visit of the Tang emperor, Taizong (r. 627–50) to the underworld and his conversation with Judge Cui Ziyu.

As Indian ideas merged with Chinese ones along the Silk Road, the idea of judges evaluating the deeds of the deceased was merged with an existing Buddhist tradition that the dead reached a critical juncture at seven-day intervals for forty-nine days: a short period of purgatory. The amalgam resulted in the belief that the dead came before judges on these seven days. But three more judges were added: the dead met them on the hundredth day, at the end of the first year and during the third year, so prolonging purgatory but making it conform to the traditional Chinese period of mourning - three years. Mention of the ten kings is seen in seventh century texts but the legitimizing 'sutra' - The Sutra of the Ten Kings - was probably not written until after the middle of the eighth century; it is not mentioned in Zhisheng's 720 list of uncanonical texts (see cats. 234, 235).1 It continued to be copied by hand and printed from the middle of the fifteenth century, but it was not admitted into the Buddhist Canon until 1912.

Cats. 296 and 297 are two different interpretations of the sutra: the former an illustrated manuscript scroll and the latter a large banner. Both are from Dunhuang and date to the tenth century, the painting shows the bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha at its centre. Kṣitigarbha, only a minor bodhisattva in Indian Buddhism, had become popular in China as a saviour of sinners and in the Three Stages Sect. He is mentioned only once in the Sutra of the Ten Kings but is prominent in the illustrations. Here he is seen in the usual iconographical treatment of this sutra, surrounded by the ten kings (the fifth and tenth are identifiable) who are portrayed as Chinese magistrates writing on open scrolls. The scene of judgment is shown at the bottom where the deceased sees his previous bad deeds in a mirror.

The scroll treatment of the sutra is incomplete, missing the frontispiece - which would have shown Ksitigarbha - and the first eighteen lines of the text. However, all the ten kings are shown after the opening scenes of the messenger on horseback and the official checking the names of the dead. As with cat. 296, the kings are depicted as Chinese officials and each is accompanied by the Boys of Good and Evil. The Indian influence is seen in the fifth king, named Yanluo - a transcription of Yama, the ruler of the land of the dead in the pre-Buddhist mythology of India. The tenth king turns the wheel of rebirth to see whether the deceased is reborn into a higher or lower path: as a god or human, or animal, hungry ghost or into hell. This is followed by an image of hell and the tortures it imposes on those unfortunates consigned there. The text starts:

[King Yama said:] 'When the ten feasts are completely fulfilled, we will spare them from the sins of the ten evils and release them to be reborn in heaven.'

and it is followed by a hymn which promises that, following the ten feasts: 'Then all sins as

numerous as the grains of sand in the Ganges will disappear of themselves.' In other words, it offers escape from rebirth and even from hell. Central to the ritual of the ten feasts was the copying of Buddhist sutras at appropriate intervals and the texts from Dunhuang, as Teiser shows, include those copied for this purpose by relatives of the deceased, as well as by the living as an insurance policy. The calendar-maker, Zhai Fengda (see cat. 160) had ten different sutras copied for his deceased wife while cat. 258, the *Diamond Sutra* copied by a man of eighty-three is one in a series of ten texts all of which are extant.²

Copying sutras and appealing to King Yama was not the only hope for escape from rebirth in Silk Road Buddhism. Cat. 298 shows a woman being led by the bodhisattava Avalokiteśvara to the Buddhist paradise of Amitābha after her death (see also cat. 178). This was part of the beliefs of the Pure Land school of Buddhism whereby those who simply chanted the name of the Amitābha Buddha would be led to the Buddha's paradise on their death: a more direct route than three years of judgement.

¹ See Teiser, Ten Kings, for a full discussion of this and the exhibits mentioned here. I am greatly indebted to Teiser for his excellent research on the Dunhuang manuscripts and the idea of purgatory in China.

² Ibid. 244 for a list.

Preparing for an Expedition (cats. 299–301)

His papers show Stein to have been a meticulous organiser, vital when preparing for expeditions lasting up to two years where he was responsible for a large group of people and animals and beholden to his sponsors for results. Always alert to new advances and inventions — he became a Marmite enthusiast after its invention in 1902 (cat. 299) — Stein kept up a constant stream of correspondence with manufacturers, asking for catalogues and specifications of camping and outdoor equipment. New products were being produced to cope with the needs of the many late nineteenth/early twentieth-century travellers: from gold-diggers in the Klondyke to explorers in the Arctic or Africa — and the Taklamakan in the winter was closer to the former. In 1900 Stein ordered a Stormont-Murphy patent Arctic and Klondyke Cooker from a London supplier. The patent referred to the solid fuel block placed inside. Stein ordered twenty boxes of these which he instructed 'should be steeped in paraffin oil in London, so as to gain high inflammability likely to be retained for a period of about 12 months.' He used it both for cooking and as a heater in the desert chill when even his fleece-lined tent did not stop the ink freezing in his pot.

There was also much innovation and discussion about the most appropriate clothing for hot and cold conditions. A German doctor, Jaeger, had developed a 'sanitary woollen underwear' line that he claimed as being excellent for hot weather. Stein ordered several items, including a blanket favoured by his dog Dash, from their shop in Regent's Street. Cat. 300 is a letter from the retailers explaining that the price of items had increased since Stein's first enquiry and thus a balance is owing. He also relied, however, on garments made to order by a local Kashmiri tailor (cat. 301), including a fur-lined sleeping bag in which he would sit to write his expedition notes in the freezing desert and coats, lined and unlined, for Dash.

Antibiotics had not yet been developed but Stein took along a medicine chest filled with remedies for himself and his party, and to dispense to locals en route – any foreign traveller was assumed to possess med-

ical knowledge. In his published accounts, Stein seems to be remarkably fit and healthy but his private letters tell a different story. He suffered several chronic problems, only aggravated by lack of sleep and poor diet. Apart from his dyspepsia – for which he visited a doctor in London after the 1900 expedition but to no avail – he suffered also from chills which sometimes developed into bronchitis, from recurrent bouts of malaria fever and, later, from prostate problems. He was able to consult various foreign doctors and medical missions while journeying but there were no foreign dentists. In 1900 he had to ask a local barber to pull a troublesome tooth, but this 'proved a painful failure. This worthy first vainly tortured me with a forceps of a most primitive description, then grew nervous, and finally prayed hard to be spared further efforts.'2

This was the age of great developments in communication technologies – the telegram, wireless and telephone – and Stein used them once they became easily available (except for the telegram which was not available until the 1940s). Communication was mainly by post, delivered and dispatched by a Dak (official) runner who would travel in fast stages to the nearest postal stations, that might be hundreds of miles away. Stein's mail from the Taklamakan Desert was normally dispatched by runner across the Pamirs into India, where it would continue by sea to Europe, but Stein also made use of the Russian Trans-Caspian railway to Moscow, whence post would continue by rail into Europe. He prepared his Christmas cards for posting in late October. While it may have been slow, it was reliable, even for bulky objects such as the proofs of his books that were received and dispatched on the hoof from the remotest desert camps.

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¹ Bodleian MSS Stein 290/9.

² Stein, Sand-Buried Ruins, 273.



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CANADIAN BRANCH:

E. A. Stein, Esq., Strinagar, Kashmir, India.

We thank you for your favour, with cheque £2., and have pleasure in sending the Blanket for your esteemed order, per parcel post, as per receipted Invoice enclosed, and as the prices of these articles had to be increased owing to great advances in the cost of the raw materials about six months ago, this leaves a balance of 4/11 still due, and we have sent you (under separate cover) copy of the current edition of our catalogue.

We are, Sir,

Yours obediently, EDJAEGER'S WILLIAM

299 Order for provisions

November 18 1905 Ink on paper H: 26.5 cm W: 21.5 cm The Bodleian Library, MSS Stein 296/96

300 Letter from Jaeger

December 11 1905 Ink on paper H: 27 cm W: 21.5 cm The Bodleian Library, MSS Stein 296/148

301 Bill from Kashmiri tailor

1900 Ink on paper H: 27 cm W: 22 cm The Bodleian Library, MSS Stein 275/4

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6 Flokets wool 0-4-0 0-4-0 4 Buckles 0-4-0 Altering and repairing coats
1. Futtoo hat sent to country
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Stein and Photography (cats. 302-306)

302 Stein's photographic notebook

1914–15 Royal Geographical Society Ink and pencil on paper 13.5 × 15.5 cm The British Library, Photo 392 Notebook 2 Throughout his career as archaeologist, explorer and scholar, Sir Aurel Stein made extensive use of photography and the medium formed a central component of his working methods. By 1900, when he made his first journey to Chinese Turkestan, the camera was well established as an archaeological tool of record. The Archaeological Survey of India – Stein's employer at the time of his first expedition – had made regular use of photography since the mid-1850s and Stein himself learned photography from his friend Frederick Andrews during archaeological trips in northern India in the 1890s. His early photographic attempts



are undistinguished, but by 1900 Stein was using the camera competently and was able to secure a detailed visual record of his first expedition. From this time onwards, photography was to play a significant documentary role in all his work.

Stein's preference for travelling with the smallest possible team meant that he had neither time nor manpower to make a comprehensive photographic documentation of every site and structure encountered. Photography was used primarily to make general records of archaeological sites and finds, and while his Indian assistants were also trained in the use of the camera and undertook some limited photographic work, Stein's duties precluded an exhaustive survey of every stage of site excavation. The logistics of his expeditions also dictated the importance of easily transportable equipment. Hand-held cameras which



303 Stein photograph, Li Ta-lo-ye, Hsien of Barkul, with his polyglot daughter

7 October 1914 Royal Geographical Society Silver printing-out paper photograph 9.8 × 7.5 cm The British Library, Photo 392/28(599)



304 Stein photograph, Chen-tai of Barkul

7 October 1914 Royal Geographical Society Silver printing-out paper photograph 9.8 × 7.5 cm The British Library, Photo 392/28 (601)



305 Stein photograph, Three Kazaks at Tamlik-bashlau

10 October 1914 Royal Geographical Society Silver printing-out paper photograph 7.5 × 9.8 cm The British Library, Photo 392/28 (603) combined the functional versatility of the large-format tripod-mounted view camera, but which could also be hand-held, had started to appear by the 1890s. For his 1900 expedition Stein used the recently introduced Sanderson Hand Camera, which could be folded down compactly when not in use and was ideal for the traveller. In addition to the Sanderson, which produced negatives measuring 5 × 7 inches, Stein also used a smaller camera for taking more informal portraits and landscape views. Acutely aware of the importance of stimulating public interest in his expeditions, these photographs formed a visual narrative of his travels, which were used to illustrate his more popular published accounts of his work. By the time of his second expedition in 1906, he had also acquired a Sinclair Una camera, which had come onto the market in 1904. Although slightly less versatile than the Sanderson, the Una was more compact than its predecessor and, most important during a strenuous expedition, was particularly noted for the quality and sturdiness of its workmanship.

While photography at this period was becoming increasingly simplified, the use of the camera during extended expeditions still required considerable and time-consuming effort. Careful estimation of chemical requirements had to be made, fragile glass plates had to be transported over long distances and processing had to be carried out in often difficult circumstances. Although in some cases Stein waited until the conclusion of an expedition before developing his negatives, his general practice was to develop his photographs on the spot, in order to be sure of having secured satisfactory results.

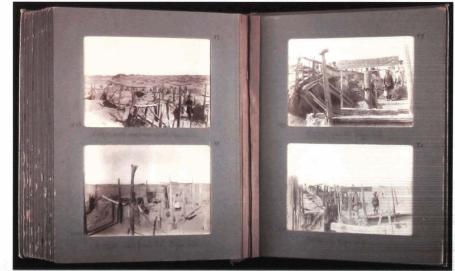
The influence of physical geography upon history was central to Stein's interests and the accurate mapping and topographical surveying of Chinese Turkestan was as important a goal as archaeological work during his expeditions. In this work photography also played a significant role. In addition to his other cameras, Stein also provided himself with the Bridges-Lee photo-theodolite, a camera which was mounted on a plane-table and which imprinted an accurate compass bearing on the negative of the scene photographed. Stein made extensive series of panoramic views of mountain scenery using this equipment and this photographic survey work later formed the basis of two published works on the physical geography of the mountain ranges of Central Asia.¹

Stein's correspondence clearly indicates the importance he attached to his photographic work. With the thoroughness that characterised all his activities, he investigated the latest cameras, films and developers, discussed his work with more experienced photographers such as Gottfried Merzbacher² and, through his friend Filippo de Filippi, sought the advice of Vittorio Sella, the doyen of mountain photography. While his work makes no pretensions to great artistry, its technical competence, together with the thoroughness of the documentation that accompanies it in the form of his negative notebooks, make the several thousand photographs taken by Stein a unique visual record of the landscapes, history and cultures of Central Asia.

306 Stein photographic album from 2nd expedition showing excavations at Niya

October 1906
Royal Geographical Society
Silver printing-out paper photograph in photograph album
Album #1: 47 cm × 30 cm:
Prints: 10.7 × 15.5 cm
Photo 392/27 (87–89)
Stein, Desert Cathays, fig. 93, 98; Serindia, vol., fig. 61-93

JF



- Mountain panoramas from the Pamirs and Kwen Lun (Royal Geographical Society, London, 1908) and Memoir on Maps of Chinese Turkistan and Kansu (Survey of India, Dehra Dun, 1923).
- 2 Merzbacher's account of his travels in Turkestan, The Central Tien-Shan Mountains 1902-1903 (John Murray, London, 1905), contains detailed descriptions of his photographic work.

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